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DAME REBECCA BERRY,

OR,

Court Scenes

IN THE REIGN OF

CHARLES THE SECOND.

" Let not that devil,
That cursed curiosity, seduce you
To hunt for needless secrets, which, neglected,
Shall never hurt your quiet ; but, once known,
Shall sit upon your heart, pinch it with pain,
And banish the sweet sleep for ever from you.
Go to : — be yet advised."

JANE SHORE.

" What then ? Things do their best, — and they and we
Must answer for the intent, and not the event."

OLD PLAY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON :

PRINTED FOR

LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, AND GREEN,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1827.

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DAME REBECCA BERRY.

CHAPTER I.

BEFORE we return to the two ladies and the impatient Alice, it may be as well to retire behind the scenes for a few moments, and witness a little of that mirth which Lord Rochester and his able coadjutor the Duke of Bucks were indulging in at the expence of the ill-fated Sir Ambrose; perhaps it is needless to say that Eden Green performed the part of the sybil; nor did it in any way interfere with his avocations as lord in waiting, he being that ubiquitous sort of personage, whose talents or person were never confined to any particular sphere.

“ Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !” laughed the hair-brained earl, when the door had fairly closed on the knight.

“ Ha ! ha ! ha !” echoed the still more delighted duke, as he emerged from the cave, where he had been an invisible spectator of the whole scene.

“ That thou didst out-devil the devil, John, (said he, when he could speak,) I never doubted, but *this* is out-Rochestering Rochester, and verily, thou never need’st fear to be eclipsed in so arduous an achievement ; ha ! ha ! ha ! I could laugh till I died at the very remembrance of the good use thou madest of the sketch I had given thee of the knight’s life and adventures ; and the horror that seized him when Master Eden so relentlessly plunged thy bull-dog Firebrand into the great tub of water, (as *he* had once done his sposa into the river, so legends tell,) was worth a kingdom, or what is still better, a whole year’s fun, at the Duke and Devil, in Crutched

Friars, though it did splash and spoil my best cloak and doublet, I not being prepared for any prank of the sort, more than the worthy Templeton, ha! ha! ha!"

"And the faint scream ! was it not to the life ?" said the earl.

"No, it was to the death," quoth the duke, "which was much more to the purpose."

"Ha ! ha ! ha ! or to the death, as thou sayest, George," laughed the earl, as he filled two large golden cups from a flask of Rhenish ; "but the scream was entirely the urchin's own invention. So here's to the *vivida vis animi* of Master Eden Green," said he, quaffing off the wine.

"*Viva ! viva !*" shouted the duke, "I would willingly buy him from thee at a thousand, and pay thee in devils."

"Marry, and I never doubted thy sagacity, gentle Bucks ; but where art thou, imp of my soul ? Come forth, thou better part of myself?" and accordingly

Master Eden issued from the cave, leisurely adjusting the trappings of his deformity, with every muscle of his face unmoved; and followed by Lord Ossory, who had accompanied the duke in his morning's expedition, and who, in spite of the melancholy that seemed to pervade all he said and did, could not help being diverted at the scene he had witnessed, though he reprobated the lengths to which the jest had been carried.

"Ho! Firebrand, my poor fellow," said Lord Rochester, caressing his dog, who, savage, wet, and hungry, was the next arrival from the cave.— "There is the wages of thy morning's services," he continued, throwing him a roast chicken, which the bull-dog devoured at a mouthful.

"And am I to be the only one," asked the duke, "who by virtue of my office has nothing to do?"

"Patience, gentle Bucks," replied the earl, "and thou shalt not long have to

complain of lack of trouble ; *thy* peculiar care shall be the best part of the creation ; that is the best, because they are the worst ; and, no doubt, Milton was thinking of women, when he makes Satan exclaim,

“ Evil, be thou my good.”

It shall be thine for to-day ; for that jealous goose, Chesterfield, is to be with me ; no doubt to ask what line of conduct my wisdom would advise him to pursue respecting his green-footed *philanthropic* lady ; and as I owe her a grudge, certes I shall strongly recommend country air, if it were only for the good of her health. So while I am engaged with him, thou must e'en attend to the fair nymphs who grace the other side of this building, and mind thou art perfect in thy lesson, not making any mistakes about the transparencies, which, when well managed, can shame even Lely's facsimiles ; and Os-sory there, who looks like a spectre, can

go with thee, and will prove an able assistant, should it be necessary to conjure up a bona fide ghost ; but go thou, (he continued, turning to Eden Green,) and bring us news of the arrivals.”

The page darted off, and his master then conducted the duke and Lord Ossory into an adjoining room, which was more like the personification of a fairy-tale than any thing in this nether world ; it was high and spacious (albeit unlike those which led to it) ; the frames of the six windows that opened on one side of it, were entirely concealed by a luxuriant foliage of woodbine and climates, which was trained so as to cover the wall within from the ground to the ceiling, and through which both light and air glanced, and sighed coquettishly ; while from branch to branch flitted innumerable birds, of the most beautifully variegated plumage, happy in their limited freedom ; others were there in imitation of them, which served to conceal mechan-

ical music, that produced, at intervals, the most enchanting harmony. The furniture of the room was so far oriental as that there were no seats beyond ottomans, which were of rose-coloured velvet, with a silver net-work over them ; the carpet was of the same coloured velvet, embroidered with silver lilies ; at the upper end of the room stood an altar, with several broad green marble steps of a circular shape, by which to approach it ; on it burnt two golden censers, full of incense, and in the centre was a figure of Hymen destroying Love ; the urchin's throat was within his grasp, and the expression of expiring life exquisitely pourtrayed in his half-closed eyes ; the arrows were falling listlessly from his quiver, and his unstrung bow lay with his flameless torch amid the fragments of some broken hearts, upon which Hymen was trampling. At either side of the altar were two chef-d'œuvres in sculpture ; the one was a Sappho, throwing herself from the Tar-

peian rock ; the rock itself, (which was placed in the centre of a very large white marble basin of perfumed water,) was of black marble ; the figure of Sappho was the perfection of art ; for it was *almost nature* ; there was poetry in her attitude, and music in her very hair ; her lyre, (which was a real one) was so constructed, that the chords vibrated to every breath that swept them. The subject of the other was Venus rising from the sea ; her head alone appeared above the shell ; but it was a head of such perfectionized loveliness as to make the beholder almost fancy they were looking it into life.

“ Come, do not turn Pygmalions, and transfer your souls to those marble divinities,” said Lord Rochester to his companions, as both stood lost in admiration before each of these statues ; “ for it is high time that thou, Buckingham, shouldst enter upon thy calling.” Saying which, he opened a door behind the altar, and, having rolled out a large dressing-glass,

(only that there was no quicksilver at the back of it), he next produced the magician's beard, cap, and robes, which he had described to the Duke the night he supped at his house ; and having equipped him in them, he placed in his hand a long white crystal wand.

"Now," said he, "sit thee on the first step of the altar, George, and look thou as wise as may be, whilst I get thee thy lesson-book ;" upon which he took from the closet a ponderous volume of hieroglyphics, (even larger than the one that had furnished the fate of Sir Ambrose,) with several horoscopes, compasses, &c. &c., and placed it open on the duke's lap.

"Here," said he, opening a box, "are the pastille hearts that my worthy friend José Corvo, Queen Kate's Jew perfumer, has furnished me with ; and, as I have already taught thee the secret of them, thine own discretion or whim must tell thee when to burn the faithful, and when the faithless ones, and they must equally

guide thee in the fantoccini of this magic mirror. All the portraits necessary to insert in it thou wilt find in yonder closet, where Ossory may remain till he is wanting ; and if he is not wanting, why he can see and hear. And I promise thee, Master Dull Child Woeful, even thy gravity must give way to see what fools ‘Dan Cupid’ makes of others, even though thou likest not over well to be fooled by him thyself. As for the lights and shadows, George,” he continued, turning to the duke, “Eden Green will manage all that part of the business for thee ; but here he comes. How now, sirrah, who waits our gracious pleasure?”

“ Two ladies, my Lord. I did not see their faces, and they are dressed as country-women ; but it won’t do — they have Whitehall in their air, the Mall in their gait, and Francisco Corbetta in their voices.”

“ Well, but can none of thy guesses

reach their identity?" asked Lord Rochester.

"None that I have yet ventured, my Lord; and yet I would wager my best Florence cloak, that I have seen the wicked black eyes of the damsel that is with them some where before."

As Master Eden concluded his surmises, a knocking was heard at the door; and on opening it, appeared that worthy and most sagacious of gentlemen-ushers, David Devildike, who had before officiated that morning in conducting Sir Ambrose Templeton to the presence of his gracious employer, and was now come to announce the arrival of another aspirant to the honour of an audience with his lordship.

"Tush, it is that goose Chesterfield," said the Earl, "and I am in no humour for his prosing; and having feasted my friend the knight so amply, little remains to regale *him* with."

"Oh, for that matter, *tarde venientibus ossa*," said the duke.

“True, *quoad* him,” said Rochester, “but *I* who have been here *before* the feast, like not to leave ere the banquet begin ; but this is the last day of my magical reign, and I must not abdicate whilst I have one subject left. So, fare thee well, my worthy minister, and see that *thy* morning’s work be well served and seasoned by dinner time.”

Saying which, he retired to the inner room to administer to the grievances of Lord Chesterfield, and Eden Green was sent to usher the two ladies into the presence of the duke.

“Dear my Lady, only think,” said Alice, entering on tip-toe from the passage, where she had been eagerly and honourably trying to overhear a colloquy on the stairs between the old woman and some other person with whom she was disputing the right of admission ; “only think how lucky it was that you came to-day, for I have just heard that old witch say that the Signor leaves the kingdom to-

morrow ; and there is a gentleman (who, I am sure, is Sir Charles Sedley, by his voice,) trying to force his way up, but she won't let him, for she says that there is another entrance for the men, and that the astrologer is too busy to see him, (I suppose so, for what a time he has kept us;) so I am sure, let him do what he will, he won't get up here, for the old hag is strong enough to conquer ten men, and ugly enough to frighten twenty."

" Pray, Alice," said Lady Cordelia, " come in and shut the door," and at the same time she moved the great unwieldy chair she was sitting in, and sat with her back against it.

Sir Charles Sedley's voice grew louder and louder, and his footsteps more near ; when, to the no small relief of Lady Cordelia, Eden Green appeared at an opposite door, and beckoned to her and Rebecca to follow him, which they immediately did.

“ You will remain here till we return, Alice,” said her mistress.

“ Oh, yes, my Lady,” said the quiescent damsel, at the same time rummaging in her pocket for a letter, with a look that said pretty plainly, “ I have quite enough *here to occupy me.*”

No sooner were Lady Cordelia and her friend in the passage that led to the room in which all futurity was to be revealed to them, than Master Eden produced two blue embroidered handkerchiefs of Persian silk, with which he blindfolded the two ladies, and so led them into Buckingham’s presence.

The duke was seated, with all becoming gravity, on the first step of the altar, where Rochester had placed him ; his eyes (which he did not raise till Eden Green had unblinded the bright ones that stood before him,) steadily fixed on the book of fate.

No sooner was the handkerchief removed from Lady Cordelia’s face, than

she was startled by a deep sigh, almost amounting to a faint exclamation, breathed very near her. She looked towards the place from whence the sound had issued, but saw nothing, save the supposed astrologer, and the room, as we have before described it.

Perceiving she did not speak, Buckingham said, in as awful a voice as he could assume, “ Daughter, what wouldst thou with me ? ”

“ I have lost,” replied Lady Cordelia, half ashamed of her own folly, and blushing as she spoke, “ I have lost a trinket more precious to me than all the gems of the East, and would know from you, great Sir, if I may ever hope to find it again, and who has got it ? — for I hear your knowledge can even reach *that*. ”

The scene in Greenwich-park instantly flashed across the duke’s recollection. He also remembered how carefully Sedley had tried to conceal the chain from his view which Lady Cordelia had drop-

ped, by keeping his foot upon it ; and, turning over the leaves of the book, with a great apparent depth of scrutiny, he replied :

“ Daughter, that trinket was a chain of Eastern gold, and to that chain was anchored all thy earthly hope ; falsehood has been, *is* still, and will be again linked within that chain. Let me see,” he continued, turning over another leaf, and measuring the circumference of several circles with a compass, “ it was lost to thee amid a fair domain, wherein revelled many bright ladies and gay cavaliers, and there lacked not royalty itself. Thou wert in goodly company at the time ; for albeit thou art not what thy garments would bespeak. But for this chain, thou lost it, as it were, in breaking from another whose yoke thou liked not over well.”

Here the astrologer closed the book, and began leisurely to sprinkle a fine white powder into one of the censers,

which was no sooner done than the apartment became filled with a fragrant and shadowy sort of vapour.

Lady Cordelia and Rebecca (but particularly the former) looked as if they felt perfectly petrified.

The vapour had scarcely passed away, before they heard played, in low silvery tones, the air of a sprightly lavolta, and almost fancied that they also heard soft echo-sounds like fairy footsteps in the air. They looked at one another, but were afraid to speak.

During this invisible ballet, the astrologer sat perfectly unconcerned, making calculations on a lotus-leaf. When it ceased he raised his head, and striking his crystal wand against the step of the altar, an elfin page (alias Eden Green,) appeared instantly, and bowing to the ground, awaited his commands, which he did not deign to intimate in any more explicit manner than by looking to the right, and waving his wand in the air —

a species of oracular communication, however, which his attendant appeared perfectly to comprehend, for he instantly placed the before-mentioned large mirror near him, and instantly withdrew.

“Daughter,” said the duke, “thou wouldest know who the knave was that stole thy trinket; wilt thou see him?”

“Willingly, father,” replied the lady, “if you can shew him to me.”

“How! *if* I can shew him to thee,” echoed the pretended astrologer, frowning darkly, “aye, and much more than thou dreamst of.”

Lady Cordelia made a sort of apologizing inclination of the head; and Buckingham, taking one of the censers from the altar, began swinging it to and fro, and again filled the room with the same blue fragrant vapour which had overspread it a short time before. This done, a low, solemn sound arose, like the distant chiming of a convent-bell, which continued about ten minutes. When it

ceased, it was succeeded by a loud noise, like a violent clap of thunder. The vapour became more dense as the astrologer stood before the mirror, passing his wand over it, and pronouncing, or rather chanting, an incantation. He next proceeded to throw into some golden urns that were ranged on the ground before the mirror, the contents of a small phial, which occasioned a sound like that of water thrown on fire, and instantly a blue phosphoric flame played round each urn; and, as it gradually ascended, shed a sort of pale, unearthly light over the surface of the glass. As the light increased the vapour decreased; and passing away from the mirror, (as clouds do from before the moon,) discovered to the eyes of the astonished ladies, the counterpart of Sir Charles Sedley!

Lady Cordelia involuntarily grasped Rebecca's arm, as she gazed on the image before her — it wanted nothing of reality but its substance; for this ethereal

and impalpable form appeared to resolve into air, as though it succumbed under the pressure of mortal looks. In short, though she and Lady Berry kept their eyes fixed on it, it vanished as it had come, they knew not how, save that the vapour again overspread the mirror ; and when it dispersed, no trace remained of Sedley. The brilliant but unearthly light which, a few minutes before, illuminated the space, had passed away, and they were left in utter darkness for two or three seconds, when the day-light again gradually filled the room, and appeared doubly vivid from the gloom it succeeded.

When Lady Cordelia had sufficiently recovered from her astonishment and horror to speak, she ventured to enquire if she should ever get back her chain.

“ Thou wilt, and thou wilt not,” replied Buckingham, in a most oracular tone, laying strong emphasis on each word, as he slowly spoke them ; “ the

links of that chain will be rudely broken, but there will be enough left to bind thee yet ; it may be, (he continued, after a pause, turning over the leaves of the mystic volume,) that blood will cement them again ; but cheer thee, daughter, the clouds are passing away from the morning of thy life, and the horizon of its meridian is brightening into a glorious day.”

The lady thanked the seer for so brilliant a prediction, and rose in a lingering manner, preparing to depart, when he interrupted her progress, by again accosting her.

“ Daughter, is there *nothing more* that thou wouldst wish to hear or to see ?”

She hung her head, as she hesitatingly replied, “ Father, you of course know best what I would wish to hear and see ;” and as she spoke, she could not, after what she had already seen, help indulging a surmise as to whether it was within the pale of possibility, that he *could*

make Lord Ossory appear in effigy, with the same exactitude he had done Sedley.

“Thou sayest truly,” returned the astrologer, “I do know best what thou wouldest like to see and hear; at least, I know what thou wouldest like to hear, and whom thou wouldest like to see best; but it is a work of more time to summon hither these choice spirits; such vapid souless things as I showed thee last, is but a journeyman’s work to make visible; but ’tis only right that thou shouldst choose the guise in which thou’dst have thy gallant cavalier appear to thee; shall he be all etherial, like a lover’s sigh, breathed in a distant land, on which his mistress never smiled? or wouldest thou have him come in palpable embodied devotion, like to a true suitor, when upon a summer’s night he steals into a lady’s bower, to leave his soul in her fair keeping? But \wp and \wp are in conjunction; so I guess thou wilt have sense enough to prefer the latter.”

As he concluded this speech, he walked leisurely to the back of the altar, and entered a door, which he shut with a tremendous crash. Lady Cordelia leant her head on Rebecca's bosom, sick with a thousand contending feelings, of which shame at her own folly, and something more than a faint hope of seeing him whom she would have given worlds to have seen, predominated. The Duke had merely retired to try and induce, or rather to insist on Lord Ossory's acting his part in the rest of the morning's scene, nor was much persuasion necessary with one who had overheard and seen quite enough to make him too happy to think of refusing to oblige any one, particularly when by so doing he gratified himself.

"I wish those cheeks of thine, which generally have so much of that pale-ghost sort of bloom, did not now look so unsupernaturally red, (said Buckingham;) however, thanks to José Corvo's

Greek smoke, and Rochester's phosphoric flames, we may make a tolerably respectable demi-ethereal of thee ; but mind, when once behind the mirror, that thou art mute and motionless as Master Eden's hump there yonder." The duke, after this conference, returned ; the vapour once more took possession of the chamber, and the whole process that had conjured up Sedley, was again resorted to, but with double effect ; for the vapour passed away from the mirror, and discovered to the eyes of Lady Cordelia, not the shade of Lord Ossory, but Lord Ossory himself! She uttered one loud and piercing shriek, and fell lifeless ; Ossory rushed, or rather would have rushed towards her, to prevent her falling, had not Buckingham sprung forward, and seizing his arm, hurried him back into the closet, saying, as he double locked the door upon him, " Dost thou want to ruin every thing by such stupid folly, when thou hast time eno: gh to woo,

(ay and win her too,) within the next four-and-twenty hours, without beginning now ; odds life, but I have a mind to spirit thee away for it, Sir Lack-wit," continued the duke, as he struck his crystal wand against the door, while Lord Ossory in vain tried to force it from within.

When Buckingham returned, Lady Cordelia was still insensible, and Rebecca having, imploringly, requested Eden Green to summons the damsel they had left in the ante-room, he (by no means disliking the mission) consented, and soon returned, leading in Mistress Alice, who entered with all the solemnity of respect, unable, however, to resist curling her pretty nose at the perfume of the frankincense which still impregnated the room ; but when she beheld her mistress stretched, as she thought, lifeless on the floor, she lifted up her hands in despair, as she exclaimed, " Ah ! *this* is what comes of believing nothing ; I knew

very well how it would be ; I told the lady what she would see, but nothing would make her credit it. However, seeing is believing. Oh dear ! oh dear ! what *shall* I do ? and what *will* my Lord Dorset say ? ” and in the midst of these and similar lamentations, the officious, and ever ready Master Eden helped her to raise her lady from the ground, and place her on an ottoman, whilst Lady Berry chafed her temples, and the astrologer lost no time in administering some drops, which soon restored animation to his fainting votary. When she again opened her eyes, and recollect ed where she was, and all she had seen, Lady Cordelia begged that she might instantly be conveyed home.

“ Do, good Master Hunch-back, (said Alice, turning to Eden Green, and placing one hand beseechingly on his arm, whilst with the other she supported her mistress’s head,) do get, or see that some one gets, a hackney coach as soon

as may be, for see how ill my lady is. Beshrew me, (she continued, lowering her voice,) but the very air of this place is enough to overpower any Christian soul, for it's only fit for imps, witches, and ghosts.—”

“ Fair damsel,” said Master Eden, kissing the hand that still honoured his sleeve, “ the coach shall be here before you have time to — ”

“ Box your impertinent ears, Master Malapert,” interposed the offended Alice. The coach soon came, and no sooner were the two ladies and their attendants seated in it, than Mistress Alice again gave vent to her thoughts, which, to do her justice, she seldom was selfish enough to keep to herself.

“ Dear, my lady, but you look a marvellous deal better already, now that you have got into the natural air again.”

“ I am quite ashamed,” said Lady Cordelia, taking Rebecca's hand, “ of all the trouble I have given you, but you

are so kind that I know you do not mind it ; and that place was so dreadfully hot that it quite overpowered me.”

“ It was indeed,” replied Rebecca, with a musing look ; and the two ladies again relapsed into silence, which ill-suited the magnitude of Alice’s curiosity, for she felt assured that it must have taken something more than a hot room to reduce her mistress to such a state ; but being determined to obtain the information she desired, or at least, not to miss it through any fault of her own, she had recourse to stratagem, and gave a very theatrical shudder, which produced the desired effect, namely, an enquiry on the part of her mistress as to its cause, which would, she thought, open a channel of communication between them.

“ Oh, my lady, do you know that impertinent jackanapes of a hunch-back had the effrontery to kiss my hand when I told him to send for a coach, and when I turned to slap his ugly face (as *I*

thought, I do declare it was no longer the old wizen one he had a minute before, but such a fair young face, quite beautiful, something like Miss Hamilton's, only, of course, not *quite* so handsome, and I really had not the heart to slap it." As she finished reciting this piece of humanity, the vehicle stopped at Sir Ambrose Templeton's house in Whitehall, and Lady Berry got out; after which, much to pretty Mistress Alice's discomfiture, her lady appeared in no very communicative mood, and no sooner had she arrived at home than she dispensed with her attendance for the rest of the day. In sooth, Lady Cordelia had enough to look back to, and as she now thought *something* to look forward to; among others she anticipated, with no small degree of impatience, the result of *the next night's masquerade*.

CHAP. II.

AT length the long-expected and differently-wished for night of the masquerade arrived. Sir Ambrose left his laboratory, alembics, furnaces, and crucibles, with all their dark treasures, for the gay scene at Whitehall ; but he could not leave his own darkened and gloomy spirit, or rather it would not leave him. Rochester, not only recalled from his long banishment, but reinstated at the very pinnacle of royal favour, prepared for it, well armed with lampoons to please, not plague, the king ; they were, in fact, a complete treasury of the maids of honour's secrets, collected during his laudable avocation of fortune-telling. The silly Blague and satirical Price were more yellow than amber itself, each secure, in anticipation, of bearing the Lilliputian

Brisacier off in triumph. The languishing Boynton left no aid of dress unsought in the hope of subduing the unsubduable Talbot. The lovely Jennings summoned her best smiles to inflict her worst wounds on her royal lover of York. The beautiful childish Stewart was enjoying the idea of Buckingham's representations after the masquerade, even more than the anticipation of the masque itself. The mischievous, bewitching Hamilton was looking like the very Graces by which she was attired, whilst the poor Princess of Babylon had not left a single yard of gauze and tissue unpurchased in London to do honour to so goodly a fête, little dreaming that her barbarous spouse would arrest her at the very threshold of her joys. Lady Berry was preparing for it with pure, unmixed feelings of pleasure and curiosity, never having seen any thing of the kind before ; and Lady Cordelia, with something more than a vague hope of seeing her former lover, and regaining

her chain ; as the astrologer (in whose predictions she began to have implicit faith) had said that it was not *absolutely* lost, though what the word absolutely meant she could not well tell, or he either, perhaps.

Sedley was, perhaps, the least satisfied of the party, as he was labouring under that mixed feeling of an anticipated revenge, which allows of as many chances of defeat as of success, and therefore furnishes all the torments that such feelings deserve. Unused as he was to meet with any thing but an almost grateful encouragement in quarters where he condescended to bestow his attentions, which were, in the opinion of the court as well as himself, almost equivalent to fame, the very unexpected, and to him unprecedented, rebuff he had met with from Lady Cordelia at Greenwich, had turned his before ardent admiration into as ardent a thirst for revenge ; and fate seemed to favour its fulfilment, by throw-

ing in his way the small gold chain of peculiar workmanship, which was so well known to belong to her. It had now been nearly a week in his possession, without even his fertile imagination being able to contrive any expedient for turning it to account ; that is, for making it publicly appear to have been a *gage-d'amour* of the Lady Cordelia's. But a favourable opportunity for carrying his designs into execution at length presented itself in the shape of this masquerade. So, taking the chain from his neck, he rudely snapped the links asunder, still retaining some of them in his possession for a future emergency, in case his present plot should fail ; which was nothing less than to indite a copy of appropriate verses, that should convey an idea of his devoted attachment to Lady Cordelia, and of her heartless coquetry towards him, enveloping the fragments of the chain in them, and then dropping the packet in some corridor, where he knew

either Charles or his satellites Buckingham, Rochester, and others would be sure to pass; and then he had no fear of the whole affair not soon becoming as public as his utmost vanity and vengeance could desire. So intent was he on these *important stanzas* that Master Upton, his gentleman in waiting, had thrice intruded as far as the door, to know whether it was his pleasure to dress, as it was growing late, and His Grace of Buckingham would call to take him to Whitehall at eight.

At length his toilette was begun and ended; and he sprang into his grace's coach with no small degree of exultation at the anticipated success of his well-laid scheme. To the duke's raillery on his unwonted dulness, he thought fit to remain as silent as though nature had denied him both wit and speech by which to convey it.

On their arrival at the palace the duke left him, saying with a laugh, as he laid

his hand on his shoulder, “ In sooth, Sir Dullard, you have usurped Sedley’s form ; but, as I am somewhat choice in my companions at a revel, I must e’en seek Sedley’s *spirit* under some other guise ; so fare thee well, Child Lack-wit.”

Sedley had not passed twice through the first suite of rooms, before he detected Rochester and the king by their echo-laugh, for which they were so famed ; and, gliding past them, dropped the treacherous packet, when he concealed himself within the recess of a window ; and, from his ambush, he had the satisfaction of not only observing the movements of the monarch and his group, but of overhearing their conversation.

“ Ho !” said Rochester, springing forward and seizing the packet, “ does the scent lie in that direction ?”

“ Nay,” said the king, “ we claim half your discoveries ; for, if our eyes deceive us not, that should be some love-gaud, inclosed within a bill of fare of

sighs and tears ; have we hit the mark, my lord ? My crown to a goose-egg but it's some half-marred assignation of Denham's."

" As your majesty cannot lay the odds," replied Rochester, " I hold it not a fair bet ; besides, I rather suspect the matter rests with Sedley, and, moreover, that he mistook his genius when he set up for his own Mercury. But be that as it may, it is a waif on these premises, and as such belongs to the lord of the manor," he added, handing it to the king, who lost no time in reading the following lines aloud : —

" Ay, gaze upon this broken chain,
Exult that thou art free ;
And when its links unite again,
Rejoice, 'tis not for me.

Gild with thy smiles each darken'd shade
A broken heart may leave ;
Or with the flaws despair has made,
'Twill not again deceive.

Then to thy victim fondly seem
To bear its weight in part ;
Like me the wretch will madly dream,
And hug it to his heart ;

Will deem the soul of those dark eyes,
Life, truth, glory, love,
And barter, for the phantom prize,
Fame here, and bliss above.

Go then, thou false one, do thy worst
Of witchery and woe ;
Sighs from thy fragrant lip may burst,
Tears from thy bright eye flow.

But there *are* looks and tones of thine,
Thou canst not give again ;
What, tho' my heart's a ruin'd shrine,
Those relics still remain,

Fresh as when first devotion laid
Them there as types of thee ;
Yet how *unlike* — for thou'st betray'd,
And *they* still cling to me.

They'll tell thee that my love for thee
Was but a passing breath ;
And *wilt* thou doubt th' eternity
Of faith that's seal'd by death ?

Of love that knew nor change nor chill,
Thro' joy, thro' grief the same ;
That had no goal beyond thy will —
No wish beyond thy fame ?

Or wilt thou, when my dead name's breath'd
By hatred in thine ear,
With envy's Upas malice wreath'd,
Believe each tale thou'l hear ?

I ask not thou shouldst waste one sigh
To hallow my lone urn;
No, those of old, which cannot die,
Shall deep within it burn.

But when my shade shall be pursued
With tales of infamy,
Prove thou 'twas virtue that I woo'd,
Proclaim my love for *thee !*"

Strange as it may seem that the witty, the fascinating, the admired, the sought-after Sir Charles Sedley should voluntarily become the rejected hero of a love ditty; yet it must be confessed, that he had felt for Lady Cordelia a something that approached nearer to real affection than he had ever experienced for any other woman: and, as for the figure he might cut in his own verses, he had *not been Sedley* if he could not, when rallied by his profligate associates on the subject, recant every syllable of it, by proving to

their, and his own entire satisfaction; that the sum total of a thousand love-vows amounts to nought.

“Surely,” said Rochester, “when the king had finished their perusal, “Dan Cupid is but a journeyman after all ; and we had better forswear the trade, if such a genius for it as Sedley fares no better than this. Out upon the craft, say I, since half a life’s apprenticeship cannot ensure success.”

“But the chain, the chain,” said the king, “whose may that be? A fair clue, no doubt, given to that Theseus Sedley, to wind him through the mazes of love’s labyrinth, more complicated than that of Crete ; but for the hapless Ariadne that owns it, methinks, my lords, ’twould be but a merry chace to seek her, and a kind one to restore it.”

“That chain,” cried Lord Arlington, “is to me as an old friend, whose face is familiar, but whose name I may by no means remember. But what if you keep

it, Sire, and by some well-timed *ruse de guerre*, extract its history from Sedley?"

"Nay," replied the good-natured monarch, "that plan savours too much of treachery."

This, however, seemed but a strange objection in the opinion of the chamberlain, for its not being carried into effect; but silence now stood his friend, as it had often done before: for which reason, as the witty and acute author of Hudibras observes, "The deficiency of his integrity was forgiven in the decency of his dishonesty."

"Here comes his Grace of Bucks," observed Rochester, "and if any one can help us to a solution of this mystery, *he* can; for there is not a gaud about court, but he can tell its whole history, with the how, the when, and the where, from beginning to end."

"Ha! George," said the king, as the duke joined them, "is it so — and can

you, indeed, tell us to whom this trinket belongs?"

"Will not your majesty hazard a surmise as to a matter I thought every body was acquainted with?" replied Buckingham.

"I must confess my ignorance," said the king, "for I swear to you by the handsomest eyes in our kingdom, (and his glanced in search of the fair Stewart's as he spoke,) that I know nothing of this chain, further than having found it within the last half hour, enveloped in a copy of verses of Sedley's writing, in which he gives timely notice that he is to die immediately, and requests the fair inhuman to whom they are addressed, to proclaim to the world that it was virtue *he* wooed."

"Now, by mine honour," cried the duke, "he gives himself but half his due of praise there; for so generous was he of this said virtue, when he'd won it (for of course the *irresistible* Sedley could not

woo *without winning*,) that he never retained a particle of it for himself.”

“ Truth was the father of that speech, wit its mother, and courage its sponsor; and yet, most noble duke, it hath a fault,” quoth Rochester.

“ To what may your wisdom allude ?”

“ To thine having, at its very outset, saddled another mortgage on thine honour, sweet Bucks, which hath already more incumbrances than all the veracity *thou* wilt ever be master of, can clear off.”

Notwithstanding the duke’s love of jokes, and his extravagance to procure them, yet a vein of economy ran through his profusion — for he liked them not at his own expence ; and, at this ill-timed jest of Rochester’s, a cloud gathered on his brow, which the king perceiving, exclaimed, “ Ods life ! my lords, we shall have no ball to-night ; we had to wait quite long enough before for the history of the Chevalier de Gramont’s varlet of a servant’s quicksand expedi-

tion, (which was, in sooth, worth waiting for,) as is, we doubt not, the memoirs of this chain ; but haste ye, Buckingham, for there are audible and visible signs of impatience — the fiddles squeak discordantly ; yonder herd of cavaliers, vagrants, and troubadours, sweep their mandolins and guitars as though they would shiver them to atoms ; Miss Hamilton has been standing for the last half hour, with her right foot pointed, ready to begin a minuet ; and our Brother of York is darting intercepted glances, through innumerable arms, at the inexorable Jennings.”

“ That chain,” said the duke, “ belongs to that perfectionized piece of fascination and cruelty, the Lady Cordelia Trevillion ; and so inseparable an appendage was it of hers, that I have often thought *it* contained some spell to render her insensible ; but how is this ? it is broken, and so, perchance, is the spell, if spell there was ;” and as he concluded,

Buckingham chuckled at the partial and accidental fulfilment of the random prophecy he had uttered to Lady Cordelia.

“ Be that as it may,” said the king, “ I will restore it to her myself; and furthermore, my lords, it is my pleasure, that the story goes not beyond the present hearers, for my mind misgives me, but Sedley came not altogether so fairly by it. Meanwhile, as none will unmask till midnight, you cannot aid me in my search for the fair owner ;” saying which he walked away to commence the ball, for which event there had been no lack of impatience.

“ Well !” said Rochester, with a sneer, “ though the age aboundeth in wonders, I never thought I should live to hear so great a one, as our *wise* monarch issuing a decree to have our lips hermetically sealed, as to the *pros* and *cons* of a Sedleian love affair ; but *tempora mutantur et nos mutamur ab illis*; is it not so, friends ?”

“ I know not,” said a tall figure, that glided past them, waving a wand in a circular direction as he spoke ; “ I know not if you *will* change, but if you *do*, it ‘ is a consummation most devoutly to be wished,’ as in such persons *any* change must be for the *better*. ”

“ Well done, Sir Conjuror ! ” cried the unabashed group.

“ By thy cone-like cap, and bear-like beard, thou hast the very pith and essence of a wit — resource ; for when thou canst not cut with the sharp weapon of a polished sarcasm, thou dost hack and amputate with the blunt razor of ill-nature ; *this* is true atticism,” said Buckingham.

“ Now does my project gather to a head, my charms crack not, and my spirits obey,” * said the figure, attired as Prospero, beckoning with his wand.

“ By all that’s lovely, thou sayest truly, that thy charms fail not, and thy

* *Tempest*, Act 4th, Scene the 1st.

spirits obey, if yon host of charms, yon beauteous spirit, hath aught to do with thee," said the duke, as he looked at a form which advanced, habited as *Ariel*; fair as the fabled houris, and sylph-like enough to have been, in reality, the being of spiritual loveliness which it personated; the glittering azure dress, studded with stars, which she wore, seemed as if it had been formed from the light clouds of upper air; the gossamer wings were so shadowy, so impalpably delicate, as to have no fixed appearance to the vision; her golden hair fell like a shower of sun-beams on her snowy shoulders, encircled by a diamond fillet, only less radiant than the eyes beneath it, which, in spite of the mask that concealed the rest of her face, shone like two stars in an eastern heaven. In her rear was a wheat-crowned Ceres, with a form that might have suited the chisel of the sculptor, or served for the study of a painter; yet was it without that magic of beauty

which played round the *Ariel* whom she followed.

“ All hail, great master !” said the latter, approaching Prospero. “ Grave Sir, hail ! I come to answer thy best pleasure, be it to fly ; to swim ; to dive into the fire ; to ride on the curled clouds ; — to thy strong bidding task Ariel, and all his qualities.” *

Pros. — “ That’s my brave spirit.”

“ Sweet spirit !” cried Rochester, Buckingham, (and Sedley, who had thought fit to draw near, under favour of his mask,) “ what are we, that you will not e’en deign to look our way ?”

Ariel — “ You are three men of sin.”

“ Mum, then, and no more, proceed,” said Rochester, personating Stephano, for the occasion.

Pros. — “ Spirit, we must prepare to meet with Calaban.”

Ariel — “ Aye, my commander, when

* *The Tempest.*

I presented Ceres, I thought to have told thee of it ; but I feared, lest it might anger thee.”

Pros. — “ But say again, where didst thou leave these varlets ?”

Ariel — “ I told you, Sir, they were red-hot with drinking, so full of valour, that they smote the air for breathing in their faces ; beat the ground for kissing their feet ; yet always bending towards their project.”

Pros. — “ This was well done, my bird.” Here a most inhuman looking Calaban advanced towards the group, and whispering something in Ariel’s ear, which caused her to tremble violently, he rolled past them ; and Prospero, Ceres, and the spirit instantly followed, and were, for some minutes, lost in the crowd : when they were again visible, Calaban had left them.

“ Now, trust our sapient monarch for hunting down the best game,” said Rochester, “ look ye yonder, if he be not

already in deep parley with that bright Ariel that was with us anon."

" Ay, truly," rejoined Buckingham, " and he is, moreover, regaling her with a sight of those dainty rhymes of Sedley's, and the mystical chain, and yet he will not give it her ; I marvel much how Charley's gallantry can resist such a suppliant."

Sedley waited for no more, but darted off in the direction to which Lord Rochester had called their attention ; from the symmetry of the figure, he had decided that Ariel and Lady Cordelia were one, and, consequently, was in the act of following her, when a flower-girl came up, and tapping his arm with a bunch of roses, asked him, in an ironical tone, meant for the king's ear, if he did not think them ugly, colourless things, compared to the matchless Stewart's cheeks.

Sedley, who knew her by her voice to be Lady Castlemaine, and who framed his answer as much for Charles as for

her, replied, “*I* know nothing, pretty one, of the cheeks in question ; but I do know cheeks, next to which those flowers would be as you say.”

“And where may such cheeks dwell?” enquired the lady.

“ They dwell in the *castle*,
They dwell in the *main* ;
They dwell in my heart,
Where they ever must reign.”

“ Nay, I know who’s the author of that compliment,” said she, linking her arm within Sedley’s ; “ for when Minerva fails him, Sir Charles Sedley never spares his Pegasus.”

Sedley would fain have relinquished the honour of escorting her ladyship to some more worthy *cicesbio* ; but, alas ! none appeared ; and he was doomed the whole evening to endure the tantalizing situation of being so near, and yet so far from the object of his pursuit, and whom he had the additional torment of seeing followed, admired, and dancing with all

the most fascinating and formidable of his rivals ; and, what was worse than all, of knowing that the chain and verses, from which his vanity had expected such a triumph, were as safe from publicity as if they were in the “Tomb of all the Capulets.” Still he was unwilling to resign all hope. He expected, he knew not exactly what ; but he had a presentiment that something would happen at supper ; nor was he, perhaps, altogether mistaken.

At a little after midnight, the masquers began adjourning to the banqueting-hall, which was splendidly decorated for the occasion. The gloom of the richly-carved oak wainscotting was dispelled by the profusion of light and flowers that adorned it — the former arranged so as to have the appearance of stars sparkling between the fresh and variegated leaves, while fountains of iced and perfumed water, placed within these mimic bowers, diffused an enchanting coolness through the atmosphere. The musicians were out of

sight, and their distant harmony only stole on the ear at intervals, like the seraph music of a dream.

The hall soon filled ; and among the many lovely there, shone the fair Stewart, the loveliest of all, sparkling in her new diamonds.

The king was to pledge the fairer part of the assemblage, as a signal to unmask ; for which purpose, when seated, the Lord Arlington presented him with a richly-embossed golden goblet, chased round with jewels. On receiving it he rose ; and withdrawing his own mask, which he flung on the ground, said —

“ So fare all the envious screens that conceal the beauteous features around us.”

The ladies lost no time in revealing their faces ; and as the masks vanished, every eye was turned on *Ariel*, *Prospero*, and *Ceres*, who proved to be, Sir Ambrose Templeton, Lady Berry, and Lady Cordelia Trevillion !

The king left his place, and advancing towards the latter, said in an audible voice:

“Lady, I find I have made a rash promise, in vowing to resign your chain — one that I should have known to be vain had I seen that face at the time ; but though *you* acted unfairly by me, in retreating behind a masked battery, and thus concealing from me the extent of the danger I had to encounter, *I* will e'en deal fairly by you ; and, in restoring it, redeem my pledged honour, but crave as a reward, that you tell me if it was early in the evening you lost it ?”

“Your majesty mistakes,” said Lady Cordelia, bowing gracefully as she received the chain ; “it was not to-night I lost it, but a week ago at Greenwich. On returning home I missed it ; and, after searching for it every where in vain, I concluded it had dropped into the Thames ; in which belief I should have continued, Sire, but for your kindness,

for which I cannot sufficiently thank you.”

As she finished speaking, the Calaban, who had before accosted her, put his head over her shoulder, and again whispered something which, though it appeared to excite in her some violent agitation, was evidently an emotion of extreme pleasure, rather than of anger or fear ; but on turning, it might be to answer him, he had (as in the early part of the night) vanished,

“ like the baseless fabric of a vision,
And left not a track behind,”

for he was no where to be seen. The king, perceiving her embarrassment, with all that kindness of manner he could so gracefully assume, gallantly replied to the thanks she had bestowed on him for restoring the chain, by saying,

“ It is a sad temptation to one’s integrity, to have the imputed merit of obliging the Lady Cordelia Trevillion ;

yet, in this instance, fate did not stand my friend so much as to allow me to deserve it ; as I believe, lady, from these lines which I found with the trinket, that you owe its restoration to Sir Charles Sedley."

As Lady Cordelia glanced her eye over them, a blush of indignation suffused her cheek ; but, almost instantly recovering her presence of mind, she returned them to the king, saying,

" Sire, I have no right to pry into Sir Charles Sedley's secrets by reading these verses, which have evidently no relation whatever to me ; and the least I can do, in acknowledgment of the good office he *meditated* towards me, (had not your majesty forestalled his intent,) is to restore him his lines in return for my chain."

As she laid them on the table, Rochester, who gloried in tormenting Sedley, placed them on the point of his sword, as he would the wing of a chicken at the end of a fork, and handed them to

him across the table, congratulating him, with a malicious smile, on his good fortune in having found them, as it would save him the trouble of inditing a supplementary sonnet to the nymph for whom they were intended.

As Sir Ambrose, in his magician's robes, was rather a formidable-looking personage, his majesty accosted him most graciously, as a sort of preface to his beautiful wife, whom he begged might be presented to him. This done, he gallantly said,

“ If we ever have another mask, after seeing that face, it will be a libel on our taste.”

Notwithstanding the revel was only in its zenith, the knight found it late, and signified to Lady Cordelia, that he thought it high time to depart; or, in plain English, he thought there were more royal glances by half than were requisite for mere courtesy, bearing towards Rebecca. Lady Cordelia was by no

means reluctant to return home, in order to enjoy the pleasure of having found her much-prized chain, and the equally great one of having foiled Sedley's malice ; and, though last not least, perhaps to dream over those words of dear import the Calaban had twice whispered in her ear.

Meanwhile Sedley left the palace, burning with rage and resentment at having been foiled by the goodnature of the king, and the innocent shrewdness of Lady Cordelia. He was by no means sparing of the maledictions he bestowed on the phalanx of link-boys he had to wade through ; but having at length succeeded in getting clear of them, he swore his way to Charing-cross ; and much appalled was his gentleman in waiting, the worthy Master Upton, at his portentous-looking visage, as he lighted him up the gloomy oaken stairs to his apartment. No sooner had they entered, than his master flung his sword from him,

and industriously pulled the feathers in his hat to pieces, a sure sign that all was not right.

“A brave mask at Whitehall to-night, no doubt, Sir Charles?” ventured Master Upton.

“Peace, varlet!” was the gracious reply.

“There has been a stripling here thrice to-night, Sir, with a letter from pretty Mistress Davis, of the king’s house.”

“Get out of my sight, scoundrel!”

“Scoundrel, indeed!” echoed Sir Charles’s gentleman, as he pulled the door after him. “Scoundrel! and so, forsooth, he can never be crossed in his devilries, but he must treat me to a ragoût of knaves, and scoundrels, and villains, and varlets when he comes home. At other times it is a different story, I warrant; *then* its ‘My worthy Upton *here*, or honest Master Upton *there*,’ when there is question of an ex-

pedition, that promises *me* all the glory of getting one or two of my ribs broken, or my skull cracked, through his fancy for other men's wives. Heigh ! how's this ? who knows but he may next take a fancy to his *own man's* wife. Oh ! Mistress Agnes Upton, Mistress Agnes Upton, I must keep a sharp look out upon *you*, when you come into this devil's den of a house. Aye, he's a born devil ; but the fellow-humour to this, I *never* saw him in. What if the Duke of Bucks *was* better dressed ? or if my Lord Rochester *did* outdo him in a *bon-mot* ? or if he found himself superseded in the good graces of his mistress by a new lap-dog ? What cause, I say, is one or all of these for his treating me in this way ? None — none whatever. I'd rather (continued Master Upton, who, during his courtship of Mistress Agnes, had contracted a habit of rhyming when in a dilemma, which he afterwards never left off) —

“ I’d rather have the coarsest pallet,
Than be Sir Charles Sedley’s valet.”

And, so saying, he flung himself on his
down bed, and soon forgot Mistress
Agnes, his master, and himself.

CHAP. III.

ALTHOUGH the monarch's speech was nothing more than a few words of courtly gallantry to the fair Rebecca, they carried a weight with them to the suspicious mind of Sir Ambrose, which rendered him so listless and uneasy, that he was glad to seize the first convenient moment to withdraw his wife from the revel. The prediction of the magicians hung heavily about his heart.

“Her place shall be soon by another’s side,” rang like a death-knell constantly in his ears. What did he portend? — either that she would prove unfaithful, or he was doomed to die. Rather did he believe the former than the latter, as likely to happen. Had not Rebecca, since he had brought her to London, been sought, followed, and admired by

all the nobles within the centre of the Court ; and since her growing intimacy with Lady Cordelia, had she not rather invited than discouraged their perpetually frequenting her mansion, for she never closed her door against company.

Rebecca had insensibly caught something of Lady Cordelia's captivating manner ; she likewise had attained more self-possession, which gave an easy playfulness to her conversation, full of *naïveté*, and so unlike the studied Court beauties, as to render her peculiarly attractive ; and Lady Berry of late had become quite the fashion.

There was no effort necessary in sustaining the simple character of *Ceres* ; but whether it was her well-assorted dress, her graceful movements, or the borrowed lustre reflected from the brilliant Cordelia, which gave Rebecca additional charms, it was difficult to say ; but so it was, that while Sir Charles Sedley pursued the bright *Ariel*, Lady Berry was sur-

rounded by motley groups, gazing on her with admiration, and speaking to her with adulation.

The ever-changing Buckingham, perpetually seeking something new, particularly when decked in the guise of loveliness, eagerly sought to discover who might be the *Ceres* of the night ; for though her face was veiled from mortal eye, her figure displayed all that sculptured grace so redolent in youthful beauty, formed to captivate the taste of the voluptuary ; and his Grace of Buckingham was too nice a connoisseur for Lady Berry to escape his exclusive notice.

Sir Ambrose in vain endeavoured to rally his spirits. He was gloomy, abstracted and miserable ; and it was only when efforts were required to sustain his character, that he for a moment shut his ears against the ill-timed compliments which poured in from all quarters on his wife.

It was not till the company were seated

at the banquet, the Duke of Buckingham discovered Lady Berry in *Ceres*; though from the tone of her voice, he suspected it, and was fain to continue the species of tormenting cruelty practised so successfully on the preceding Monday towards her credulous and superstitious husband, enjoying, with malignant merriment, the influence the late scene had upon his spirits; for it was evident that he was jealous and suspicious of every person who even approached Lady Berry.

Rebecca had been so much diverted with the night's revel, as not to have remarked the listlessness and frowning discontent which sat on her husband's brow.

The scene was so novel and amusing, she was quite engrossed by its endless variety. The conclusion had proved most agreeable, as related to Lady Cordelia; for she fully participated in the joy which she experienced in the recovery of her chain, a relic so precious; nor was

she sorry for her triumph over the vain, invidious Sedley, whose conduct proved he liked to mortify and torment.

When Sir Ambrose Templeton arrived at home, the effort to support his spirits was at an end. Ashamed, however, to reveal this weakness to his wife, and the prediction which preyed on his mind, he desired her to go to her chamber, as he meant to spend some hours in his laboratory before he retired for the night.

Rebecca now first observed the ghastly expression of his countenance ; the wildness of his eyes, and an agitation in his manner quite unusual. She was alarmed ; but accustomed always to obey Sir Ambrose, and somewhat afraid of him, she merely cast on him a look of anxious enquiry as she was leaving the room. His eye at the moment was so steadily and earnestly fixed on her, that when her eyes met his, the beaming benignity and placid sweetness of Rebecca's made him ashamed of the unjust surmises he

had been prone to form ; and saluting her with kindness he said, “ You look pale and weary, Rebecca, go to rest.”

“ In sooth,” he continued, “ it was a motley scene of folly, of which we partook to-night. Some of the characters, I suspect, were only drest in their natural guise, when they wore a fool’s coat on their back. Then the palavering flattery ; the fulsome nonsense Buckingham and other of his majesty’s creatures poured into your ear, was enough to turn the brain of a young woman with even more good sense than my discreet Rebecca.”

“ I could only smile,” she timidly replied, “ at all I heard ; and observe, that his Grace of Buckingham, who is quite a courtier, and, therefore, an adept in flattery, had taken an additional lesson from Sir Charles Sedley. Though I have lived so short a period beneath the contagious influence of its honied breath,

be assured, such flowery compliments have not reached beyond my ears."

"Nor shall they," he answered hastily, "while I have the power to prevent it."

Sir Ambrose paused for a few minutes, and walked the room in gloomy abstraction. At length he proceeded gravely, and fixing his eagle-eyes upon his wife — "Tell me, Rebecca, and tell the truth; should you grieve to leave all the gaieties of the court for retirement?"

Rebecca coloured, looked down, and was silent.

"Ah!" cried he, with quickness, darkly scowling, and again pacing the room, "I see how it is. Like the rest of your sex, you have already imbibed a taste for pleasure. You like amusement — vanity — adulation — true woman. Lady Cordelia Trevillion, too, with all her sense, is easily lured into the snare, and is open to flattery, unguarded, impru-

dent, else she would not have tolerated Sir Charles Sedley : —

“ Who can, with a resistless charm, impart
“ The loosest wishes to the chaste heart.”

Though chaste, she assuredly is, or she should be no companion for my wife.”

Again he was silent for some minutes, and then continued : —

“ But, before it is too late, we will remedy the coming evil ; we will change the scene, Rebecca ; not for the gloom of Gloomore Castle, but for livelier places. We will visit foreign countries ; fresh knowledge will be imparted to you of a more improving nature than all the frivolity you have lately witnessed. We will converse further on the matter to-morrow.”

Rebecca answered Sir Ambrose, by saying, “ Whatever he willed, she was ready to accede to.”

She spent a sleepless night, ruminating on her husband’s sudden intention to

quit the kingdom. Brought up in the cheerful, tranquil scenes of domestic life, Rebecca sought not, wished not, for that courtly splendour, and voluptuous dissipation in which she had lived for the last three months. Yet, so insensibly had she been initiated in them, so seducing to her mind were all its glittering pleasures, that Rebecca was scarcely aware, without strict self-examination, how much they had gained upon her taste and imagination. She was dazzled with the splendour of the court ; captivated with those soft insinuating manners, which stole upon her senses, and she never had tasted such enjoyment in any society as that which the brilliant Lady Cordelia and her satellites afforded.

In the comparative retirement in which she formerly lived, she was happy and contented ; she had known no other ; but now elevated, not merely into high rank, but a brilliant sphere, where she possessed her own share of admiration

and adulation, it would not have been human nature, if Rebecca had felt otherwise than she did. The wife of a gloomy, superstitious misanthrope, to whom she was united, not from affection, but only from a sense of honour and principle ; had she not been satisfied and pleased with the station she filled in society, and which she had no inclination to vary, she would have been unlike other young women, so redolent in youth and beauty.

When Sir Ambrose named his intention of leaving London in the meridian of its gaiety, she could not conceal her astonishment and chagrin, at so unlooked-for a circumstance ; and while the colour mounted to her cheeks, she was quite unable at the moment to make a reply. Afterwards, a just sense of the obedience due to a husband, made her ready to go where he pleased.

CHAP. IV.

REBECCA, after waiting breakfast a considerable time for Sir Ambrose, at length ventured to send and enquire if he chose his to be sent to his laboratory, where he had passed the whole of the night. She dared not break in upon his privacy ; but she began to be uneasy at his non-appearance.

After his gentleman in waiting had knocked repeatedly at his door, Sir Ambrose at length opened it a-jar, and putting his head out, fiercely demanded what he required, and why he had presumed to disturb him ?

Bowing submissively, he delivered his message.

“ Tell your lady,” he answered, more mildly, “ not to disturb me again. I shall join her at dinner.”

Rebecca, almost as unhappy as her

husband, whose former ferocity of character appeared to be returning, in vain endeavoured to amuse herself with a book. She could not, however, keep her attention alive, and therefore determined, as Sir Ambrose had said they were not to meet until dinner, to walk to Lady Cordelia's ; for in her society she always experienced relief to her spirits, as well as pleasure.

She found her friend seated at a table, so deeply engaged in perusing what appeared to be a large packet of letters ; she scarcely looked up on her entrance. Beside the packet lay an open case, containing the miniature picture of a youth, in all the bloom of health and loveliness ; and as Rebecca approached, from the partial glance she gave, recognised a perfect resemblance to the shade that had passed before them at Signior Manfredati's on the former day.

Lady Berry also remarked the chain, such a source of grief and misery was

again suspended from Lady Cordelia's neck. The golden heart, she guessed, was fixed close to that warm heart, now throbbing with undiminished joy, if she might judge by the radiant lustre of her bright eyes, as they gladly beamed upon her.

"Dear Lady Cordelia," exclaimed Rebecca, "I now may use your own phrase once to me, 'You look so happy — how I envy you.'"

"Not quite happy yet," she returned, with a half-suppressed sigh; "but," she added, more gaily, "I have got back my chain, at least a part of it, which, by some artful wile of Sir Charles Sedley's, probably would never have been restored to its proper owner, if it had not fortunately fallen into the keeping of our good-natured monarch."

"Is there witchery in the chain," said Lady Berry, half-smiling, and looking archly, "that its recovery imparts such joy?"

“ ‘ Thereby hangs a tale,’ ” replied the lady ; “ but ’tis a rueful one. Some day I may tell you some of my youthful follies ; for most young girls have the folly of falling desperately in love before they have considered all the miseries appertaining to so disastrous a case. But, in truth, sweet Rebecca, since you have borne so kind a share in all my griefs, (for I have grieved almost to frenzy,) it is but generous now to impart their origin.

“ Look at this picture,” she proceeded, presenting that of Lord Ossory lying on the table, “ tell me if it is not a face to steal hearts less easy to be won than mine ; nor can it be a wonder, with such a face so faultless, a person so graceful, and a mind as perfect, he took captive the many of all womankind he seemed born to subdue.

“ We will pass over the mysterious adventure of yesterday morning, and recur

alone to my first acquaintance with Lord Ossory."

Lady Cordelia related to Rebecca all the particulars already detailed ; and concluded by acknowledging how entirely her future happiness depended on the fulfilment of the magician's prediction ; confessing she was very sanguine in her expectation, from the miraculous restoration of the chain, which had been given as a pledge of constancy and affection, by Lord Ossory, in the dawn of their love and happiness.

Rebecca always suspected that the Lady Cordelia had some latent sorrow, some tender attachment which preyed on her heart ; for, at times, her vivacity was overstrained ; and, while her brow was clouded with sadness, her mouth was dressed in smiles. So rich, so young, so powerful, so highly-gifted with talent, so captivating in address, it was not likely she was fated to spend her days in the sober sadness of widowhood, nor that she

would so scornfully reject the numerous admirers who pressed their suit, had her affections been disengaged.

For the present, Rebecca forgot her own cares in listening to Lady Cordelia's interesting narrative; but time had worn so speedily away, she had not a moment left to impart her uneasiness, and could only say, as she took leave of Lady Cordelia, "your sun of happiness is rising, mine, probably, will soon be set for ever; and, though we may meet no more, my fervent good wishes, my tender remembrance will attend you to the end of life."

"What do you mean?" cried the lady, "like your husband, you speak in mystery."

"Mystery, indeed!" replied Rebecca, "if you knew all. Ah! dear Lady Cordelia, I soon shall leave you to go I know not whither. Sir Ambrose means to travel into foreign countries, and of late seems to have given himself up to all that gloomy superstition which has grown:

upon him since he held discourse with his Grace of Buckingham. Surely astrology is the science of the evil one."

"Sir Ambrose," interrupted Lady Cordelia, "positively shall not take you from us. I must talk to him. It would be barbarous indeed. No, it cannot, it shall not be; rather will we take out a statute of lunacy against him, if he acts so like a madman. Tell it not in Gath, Rebecca. But I heard it whispered that Buckingham, and that arch fiend Rochester, had so imposed upon his credulity last night at the masquerade, by their machiavelian arts, as to send him home almost ripe for bedlam; all the time laughing in their sleeves (this I accidentally overheard) at the mischief they had achieved."

Rebecca, already beyond the hour of returning home, could not stay even for a farther explanation, and quitted Lady Cordelia with very uneasy sensations to

meet Sir Ambrose, who was in no very pleasant mood.

The interesting history which Lady Cordelia had unfolded of herself, would have occupied all Rebecca's thoughts, if her own uncertain destiny had not awakened the most painful anxiety.

She had only time to change her dress on reaching Whitehall, when she was summoned to dinner.

Naturally timid, Rebecca trembled with apprehension when Sir Ambrose entered the room, doubtful in what sort of humour he would meet her. His brow still was overcast, though he tried to address her with a forced smile of complacency. She did not speak, she was afraid, for he did not like to be noticed even with the common place salutations of the day.

“Have you been at home all the morning, Rebecca?” he carelessly enquired.

“Not all the morning; I went to con-

gratulate Lady Cordelia on the recovery of her chain."

"A yoke," he returned sarcastically, "Sedley, it should seem, was unwilling longer to wear; though, according to his love-ditty, the lady must have given him no slight encouragement, and then was indignant and surprised that he presumed upon it; but you women would gladly make all mankind your slaves, and put them into leading strings."

Rebecca dared not, in Sir Ambrose's presence, attempt any vindication of Lady Cordelia's conduct, and therefore remained silent. It was but recently she had herself thought that Lady Cordelia had favoured Sir Charles Sedley's advances; and though now, from her late declaration, she was convinced of the contrary, yet, to the eye of the world, she certainly seemed to have encouraged his presuming freedoms, and Sir Charles Sedley was not a man to be easily repulsed.

The dinner passed over in gloomy silence and gloomy state. After the servants were dismissed, Sir Ambrose, who had remarked the dejection of his wife's countenance, at length said, "Are you more reconciled than you were last night to the idea of leaving London, and all its foolish pageantries?"

"That they tend not to happiness, I am quite sure," Rebecca answered, "yet there are some individuals I shall be very sorry to leave."

"May I enquire who they are?"

"Certainly; Lady Cordelia Trevillion for instance."

"And *only* Lady Cordelia?" he interrupted with quickness, darting his eagle eye upon her.

"Only Lady Cordelia as a friend; but several, perhaps," she replied, "as general and amusing acquaintances, whom I cannot particularize."

The frank simplicity with which Lady Berry spoke silenced her husband.

Again there was another wearisome pause ; at length he continued, “ Was there not some engagement for this evening ; some water party to Greenwich ? Make the most of your time, Rebecca, in the way of amusement, for soon this life of junketing and frolic will have an end.”

“ I am not,” she returned, “ desirous to go to Greenwich to-night, if, Sir Ambrose, it is displeasing to you.”

“ No, Rebecca, I do not wish to baulk you in any innocent recreation ; go, by all means, along with Lady Cordelia, only do not stay late.”

Rebecca was to be at Lady Cordelia’s house early in the evening : not a little anxious to see her again after their interview in the morning, and to hear more, should an opportunity offer, of the interesting Lord Ossory, she quickly equipt herself for the evening’s pastime, and proceeded to Lady Cordelia’s.

Instead of finding her awaiting her

arrival, what was Lady Berry's astonishment and dismay on being told, that Lady Cordelia had gone to her chamber very ill, having been seized with a succession of fainting fits.

CHAP. V.

SEDLEY had changed his plans, and with them his humour ; and the next morning Master Upton was summoned to his levee with as many smiles and gracious words, as he had been dismissed with frowns and imprecations the night before. But, albeit, unaware of the alteration that had taken place in his master's mood, it was with strong symptoms of what the vulgar denominate fear, that this worthy personage entered with the flask of chambertin, and cold pheasant, that was to constitute his patron's morning repast. What then was his delight at finding, that the most luxuriant and halcyon of calms had succeeded to the most tempestuous of hurricanes ; and even that half a toilet had been achieved without his assistance. But as no human

felicity can be perfect, a dark cloud came over all this sunshine, as Master Upton's telescopic mind discovered through the vistas of some vague suspicions, another dwarf-and-giant compact, from which his master was to reap fresh glory, and he incur new danger ; nor did he feel in any degree less convinced of this by the very bland and courteous manner in which the knight addressed to him the following commands :

“ Good Master Upton, disencumber yourself of that salver, and then, in pity, remove yon violet-coloured suit ; (pointing to one that lay on a chair near him, and which he had worn twice,) it may do very well for you to appear amiable in the eyes of pretty Mistress Agnes when she comes ; but it is unworthy the honour of longer being about my person. Dost not think so, my worthy friend ? ”

The gentleman in waiting instantly removed the obnoxious garment, but was utterly unable to reply to his master's

interrogation. Out of its fulness the *heart may speak*, but the *head never can*; and Master Upton's was at this moment so full of surprise, (not altogether devoid of fear,) that his very tongue refused to do its office, which, in general, it performed with an unremitting zeal that gave a paradoxical but positive refutation to that proverb which falsely asserts “Idleness to be the root of all evil.” Not a soul at Whitehall, from the maids of honour down to their abigails, and even their dogs, but could have averred that, had Master Upton's vocal organs sometimes remained *idle*, less evil would have occurred in that portion of his majesty's dominions. Sedley was aware of this, and had too much policy not to reward, as they deserved, talents which had served him so well in injuring others, and which he was so competent to appreciate.

One leg of the pheasant had disappeared — two or three cups of the chambertin

had for ever bid farewell to the flask ; Sir Charles Sedley had leant back in his chair—had condescendingly taken his right foot by the hand, (the left hand we should say ; for precision, when things are driven to extremities, is important,) and caressed his chin-tuft some three or four times, when he again (as if for want of something better to do,) addressed his valet —

“ Upton, you sometimes go to the Duke of Ormond’s, do you not ? ”

“ Ay truly, Sir ; but often as I’ve been, strange to say, by night or day, (beg pardon, didn’t mean to rhyme,) I have never caught even the most distant view of Miss Hamilton’s waiting-wench,” subjoined Master Upton, with the promptness of alarm, as a surmise darted across him that he was to be made Mercury in some embassy to the fair Elizabeth ; and exclusive of his not being over ambitious of the species of glory which generally attended those sort of missions, he had of

late entered into a *liaison* with Monsieur Termes, the Chevalier de Gramont's *premier gentilhomme*; had won divers broad pieces from him at sundry times, at a *salon bourgeois* in Spring Garden, (which, from being much frequented by gentlemen of their class, who gambled away their own and their masters' money, had, among the lacqueys at White-hall, obtained the name of the 'Valets' Den,') and having done so, he felt assured that Termes would act the part of the most faithful of servants by his master, should he discover his *cher ami* Up-ton to be a party concerned in any designs upon Miss Hamilton. No wonder, then, that a cold shudder succeeded these reflections, as he already experienced by anticipation the not only *coups de baton* of Termes, but even the *coups de pied* of the chevalier himself.

Meanwhile, his master's eyes were withdrawn from him, and were making the tour of the apartment, as if in search of some given point to fix on. At length

they returned to the place from whence they had set out, namely, Master Upton's anxious, order-waiting face, whose last words he repeated in a measured, abstracted tone.

"Miss Hamilton's waiting-wench — no. But do you ever (he continued, stooping to adjust the rosette of his shoe,) hear them say any thing about Lord Ossory, or when he's expected home?— eh."

"Oh, dear, yes, Sir," said Master Upton, considerably reassured, and with a simper at his own logic, "but he's *not* expected, for he's come."

"Ha!—come, say you?" cried Sedley, grasping Upton's doublet with rather more fervour than that personage liked, for it caused him to relapse into his recent tremor.

"Come, but how? when? tell me, tell me all, good Upton, and quickly."

"Surely, Sir, surely;" and the valet smoothed his ruffled doublet; and, on the strength of "*Good Upton,*" felt and

looked with the assurance and self-importance of a prime minister in critical times, when, however, he feels the game to be in his own hands.

“ Why, Sir, an’t please you, he’s been here this week back ; he even supped some eight nights ago at the Duke of Buckingham’s ; (this, however, is a marvellously deep secret, as they do say, he went to France, to do some sly-bidding of the king’s;) but *Monsieur Challon*, the Duke of Buck’s *maitre de cuisine* with whom I hold acquaintanceship, had a letter ten days ago from Monsieur Termes, the Chevalier de Gramont’s servitor, who was then in France, and who knew the Prince de Condé’s valet, who knew the Marquis de Balzac’s, who knew my Lord Ossory’s, who” —

“ Truce to thy prate, sirrah, dost never mean to have done with thy catalogue of who knew’s? *I know* nothing, yet, for all thou hast been palavering this hour, and I want to know when this lordling

arrived ; and, above all, if he be now in London ? and see that thou tell me this briefly, without any histories or genealogies.”

“ Well, well, well,” resumed Master Upton, who feeling his importance, in possessing a piece of knowledge his master wished to obtain, and being always an advocate for retributive justice in the *second* person, or in other words, for tormenting his tormentor, *à son tour*, let his words limp out like a lame cart-horse ; “ well, Sir, but I was on the point of stating the fact of his having supped with my Lord Duke, some”—

“ How now, knave, again at your endless beginnings ; once, for all, is Lord Ossory in London, or not ?”

“ Softly, softly, Sir ; by your leave ; but you frighten the best of memories away, and leave nothing but confusion in its stead ; let me see where was I ?— Oh, ay, touching my Lord of Ossory’s arrival ; yes, Sir, he *is* in London ;” and

Master Upton drew up with conscious dignity, as he pronounced the emphatic sentence.

“Art sure of this, good Upton?”

“As sure as that I have the honour to serve the finest gentleman in England,” replied the valet, with a bow, which, without compromising his own importance, must, he conceived, considerably enhance that of his master.

“And if so, how doth it fall out that he was not at last night’s mask? or that none have seen him since he came?”

“For that matter,” said Master Upton, assuming the tone at once of a counsellor and expounder of riddles, “he may have his reasons, (which concerneth no man,) for not appearing at revels; but for seeing him, he may be seen any day from ten till noon between the Mall and Spring Gardens, his usual haunts.”

“My best cloak and doublet to thee, if thou canst aver this as a surety?” said Sedley.

“ And I will forfeit the richest suit the king himself ever wore, or what is still more difficult, prove the fairest lady, *my* master ever wooed, a fright, if it be *not* true,” rejoined Master Upton.

Sedley folded his arms, and took two or three hasty turns up and down the room; and then, stopping opposite the window, sent a long look up the street, towards the palace, and burst into his peculiar laugh, as he was wont to do on several occasions, all equally opposite in their nature.

“ Quick, good Master Upton, do thine office; let me be dressed and out.”

“ And what suit may it please you to wear, Sir?”

“ Suit, oh! yes, ‘twill suit to a miracle, suit to a nicety, and mar his suit to boot, which is worth all other suits.”

Master Upton grew alarmed for his personal safety; recollecting that it was an axiom of his honoured father’s, that with mad people, those were more mad

than they, who did not always guard against the worst ; and *mad* he thought his master certainly *must* be, to let his speech run wild at such a rate ; he, therefore, effected a timely, but gradual, and above all, noiseless retreat, behind one of the friendly folds of a large Indian screen ; which evolution being unperceived by his master ; the latter added, after a moment's pause —

“ Oh, ay ; what suit I shall wear ? let me see, give me my sad-coloured suit of Stewart brown, *point d'Alençon* collar, and *terre d'Egypt* hose ;” and then, for the first time, missing his valiant attendant — “ Why, where, in the name of all the devils, art thou, knave ?”

“ Here, Sir, here ;” bowed Master Upton, emerging from his ambush, and thinking to take advantage of this lucid interval to get nearer the door, but for which inducement, he would, most probably, have resolved upon lying *perdu* the whole day.

“ Well, dost thou hear ? give me my cloak and doublet of Stewart-brown, and all else that befits the suit.”

“ Ye — ye — yes, Sir ;” and one hasty stride across the room placed the handle of the door within the affrighted valet’s convulsive grasp.

“ How now, sirrah, whither so fast ?”

“ I — I — I was merely going to get you a Restoration-handkerchief ;” stammered out the intercepted Master Upton.

“ When do I ever wear two kerchiefs, varlet ? and is there not one on yonder stand ? Quick, my things ; and stir not till I leave this.”

With reluctant and trembling hands, Master Upton now proceeded to assist his master in the putting on of the before-mentioned sad-coloured suit ; which task was no sooner accomplished, than for the first time (since his attempted escape) trusting his ears with the sound of his own voice, he ventured to enquire, “ what beaver he would be pleased to wear ?”

"The one with the goss-hawk's plume which I killed at Melrose," was the reply.

This was a day in which Master Upton was doomed to witness more wonders than one; for, when Sedley's toilette was finished, he observed him to select from out the numerous and costly chains and trinkets that were profusely scattered on the table before him, the fragment of a chain, not peculiarly handsome in itself, (even had it been in a perfect state,) and affix it ostentatiously across his vest. It was, in fact, the relics of Lady Cordelia's, which he now wore from other motives than those dictated by love.

"Give me some half-dozen rapiers, Master Upton, that I may choose which shall be my friend to-day."

This faithful servitor instantly obeyed his command; and Sedley, unsheathing them each in their turn, bent the foils severally against the floor, in order to

determine which was the best-tempered steel.

"Ah! my trusty ruby-hilt," he exclaimed, resuming the fourth he had tried, "thou hast never once played me false. A Turk would take thee for a Damascus blade; but I now take thee for mine own."

Saying which he girded it on, and then concealed his very white hands within the snowy precincts of a pair of highly-perfumed, crimson-topped, white kid gloves; after which Master Upton presented him with a Restoration handkerchief, the *vade mecum* of a gallant of those times, which was composed of white fringed taffety, with a border of oak-leaves embroidered in green flox silk. This, placed in his bosom, with two ends appearing, the fascinating Sedley sallied out to inhale the morning air; not, however, unaccompanied by an elevation of the eyebrows, and a long-drawn "*Whew!*" from Master Upton, who could not re-

frain from venting his sentiments in the following soliloquy : —

“ Fool me, if there is not something in the wind more than usual this morning. I’ve half a mind to follow — yes, I will — no, I wo’n’t, though. What if he caught me? he might run me through with that said ruby-hilted rapier, by way of prelude. Yet there can be no harm in my going, if he don’t find it out ; yet he’ll assuredly break my bones if he does ; (here Master Upton placed a hand on either side for protection;) then more fool I to let him.”

After this brief review of his politico-moral code, he gave one look at the window, to see how far his master had got, and the next moment found him in the street, following him as closely as prudence would permit. They had not proceeded far, when the sky became overcast, and one of those summer showers, which come and go so suddenly, descended in torrents. Sedley took refuge

under a gateway. He never was long any where without examining his companions (if he had any); and here his attention was soon arrested by a girl, whose face was completely concealed by the large Genoese wimple that she wore, and who was carefully endeavouring to shelter two very beautiful moss-roses (which she carried in her hand, tied with a blue ribbon) from the storm.

"I think, pretty one, (said Sedley, in his low soft voice, offering to take the flowers from her,) that I might hold these for you whilst you shake the rain from your hood."

"How do you know whether I am pretty or not, since you have not seen my face?" replied the girl pertly, without taking any notice of his proffered attention.

"The way I know it is, that nature never does things by halves—and such a pretty little foot and ankle never could belong to the owner of an ugly face. But I do not want to take any thing for granted, I

only want to see and believe ; and if I have been mistaken, I will acknowledge my error on the face of it, and cry you a thousand pardons for having accused you of being what you are not.”

“ As you are never likely to know what I am, you might perhaps like to know what I am not ?”

“ Even so, then ; for knowing this, I may easily guess what you are. But what, I pray you, is it that you are not ?”

“ I am *not* a person to be prattled with by every Whitehall sprite that is caught in a shower of rain ; nor to lend my ears to their nonsense.”

“ Then, believe me,” said Sedley, seizing her hand, and pressing it while he spoke, in a tone of mock gratitude and devotion that infinitely amused the bystanders, “ *I am not*, or ever shall be while I exist, ungrateful for this *peculiar* mark of your favour and attention to *me*. ”

The offended damsel raised her hand to inflict correction on the cheek of her

tormentor ; in doing so she severed one of the roses from its stem, her hood fell back, and discovered a face as fresh and as pretty as the remaining flower. The current of her thoughts was changed ; she stooped to pick up the fallen flower, and bursting into tears, exclaimed, “ Oh, you poor beautiful rose, what shall I do—what will my lady say ? ”

“ And whom may your lady be, my little Flora ? ” enquired Sedley, as he helped her to pick up the scattered leaves.

“ Oh, my lady will be so vexed,” said the poor girl, only thinking of the misfortune she had met with, and not minding what he said. In the meanwhile, she had put some things out of her hand on the pavement, and among others a billet, the superscription of which ran thus, in Miss Hamilton’s hand-writing : “ To the Lady Cordelia Trevillion.”

This was quite enough for Sedley, who instantly tried to extract the history of the flowers from her pretty tire-woman, but in vain.

While the people were yet gathered round Alice, (for it was in reality she,) assisting her to collect the fragments of the rose, every leaf of which she appeared to secure with the greatest care, a boy came up, swinging a large blue, empty bag with one hand, and throwing a stick for a little dog to run after, with the other.

“By your leave, good people, by your leave, Sirs,” said he, trying to wade through the crowd.

“Oh, pray Sir, good Sir,” cried Alice, arresting his foot with her hand, “do not tread on these leaves ; do not, pray, go on till I have picked them up.”

The boy made no other answer than by slinging his bag across his shoulder, kneeling down, and becoming another of Alice’s assistants. He had no sooner done so than their eyes met, and an exclamation burst from each.

“Is it you, Mistress Alice?”

“Is it you, Master Eden?”

After each had mutually assured the

other of their own identity, Alice, with many fresh tears and lamentations, gave Eden Green the history of the scattered rose.

“Well, well, Mistress Alice,” said he, when she ceased speaking, “it were hard if I could not get you two equally pretty roses in all London.”

“Ah, I’m afraid not,” said Alice, “for you don’t know where these came from.”

“And may I ask where they *did* come from?”

“From José Corvo, the Queen’s Jew perfumer, who buys up all the choice flowers within twenty miles of London,” said Alice, looking round, and lowering her voice, “and I don’t even know where he lives ; and if I did, it would be no use, for he will only sell his flowers to certain people.”

“And is it so sure,” said Eden Green, looking at her with an air of tender reproach, as if piqued at her doubting the

possibility of his doing any thing for her, “is it so sure that *I* do not know where he lives, and that he would not sell *me* a rose?”

“Oh, I know, Master Eden, that you are very clever ; and what is better, very obliging and—”

“Well, then,” said Eden, “if you think so, perhaps, Mistress Alice, you would trust yourself with me as far as the Jew’s house ; at least we had better get out of this crowd,” he added, helping her to conceal her pretty face under her hood, “had we not?”

“Oh, surely, surely, Master Eden ;” and Alice turned round to thank the people who had helped her to pick up the rose-leaves. The rain was over, and they now dispersed.

Not so Sedley, who resolved upon following Alice and Eden Green to the Jew’s house, (which was situated at no great distance, within a court in the Strand,) with the intention of reap-

ing more information respecting the flowers, from their conversation as they went ; and so occupied were they with themselves, that they did not perceive that his were the footsteps whose echo they heard constantly behind them.

“ I hope,” said Alice, when they had reached the end of Charing-Cross, opposite Sedley’s house, that led into the Strand, “ I hope José Corvo does not live *very* far off, for the rain has already kept me out longer by an hour than I should have been.”

“ Five minutes more, and we shall be in his warehouse,” replied her companion ; “ but, Mistress Alice, if the question be not unseemly, may I ask how it comes that you set such a high value on those particular flowers ?” And Master Eden opened and shut his bag while he spoke, with as much avidity as if life and death depended on that occupation.

“ Oh dear yes,” said Alice, “ the flowers were not mine, or I should not

have thought so much of them ; but this morning my Lady sent me (as she often does) with a message to Miss Hamilton ; well, she had been up last night so late, that I was shown into her dressing-room, which she had not yet left ; and there sat on a couch reading, a very handsome, but sad looking young gentleman, who, when he looked up, I saw to be her cousin Lord Ossory. While Miss Hamilton was writing an answer to my Lady's message, a page brought in a large bunch of moss roses, (all as beautiful as this, and the one I broke,) and he said they came from José Corvo's, on the part of the Chevalier de Gramont, to Miss Hamilton ; she kissed them, and called them, '*des amours*,' which, no doubt, is the French name for mossroses, for the Chevalier is French, you know, Master Eden." Master Eden bowed and smiled, and Alice proceeded. " She then put them in water herself, and said to the Lord Ossory,

‘ Cousin, I will be very generous, and let you send two of my prettiest roses to the prettiest lady in the world.’ ‘ Not till I know,’ said he, smiling, ‘ whether we should bestow the same epithet on the same person.’ ‘ I am afraid we should not,’ said Miss Hamilton, ‘ for no doubt *you* would not think pretty, half pretty enough ; but this will decide the matter,’ and she showed him what she had written ; when he saw who it was to, he coloured very much, and said, ‘ Nonsense, Elizabeth, you are so silly.’ ‘ Why, you know,’ cried Miss Hamilton, laughing, ‘ we have always been reckoned like, but I never knew till now, in *what* the resemblance consisted ; but if you have so little gallantry in you, as positively to refuse sending these flowers, I’ll first forge a most tender billet in your name, to the lady in question, and then get little Stewart to use all her influence with the king to have you banished from Whitehall, as a person whose

Cato-like propensities (whatever she meant by that) render you a disgrace to his court.' He then laughed in his turn, and, taking two of the very best roses, he tied them very carefully up with this blue ribbon, and put them into my hand without saying a word; but Miss Hamilton said to me, 'Be sure, Alice, you do not tell Lady Cordelia what difficulty I had to make him send her these flowers, or she will be too proud to accept them.' Well, if you'll believe me, at the mention of my lady's name, he darted out of the room, as if she had been somebody he disliked, instead of ——; but that's neither here nor there; and now all I have to tell is, that five minutes after I left the Duke of Ormond's, on my way home, I was caught in that nasty shower (plague on it), and was obliged to take shelter under a gateway, more to save the roses than myself, when who should be there, but that wicked, smooth-tongued Sir Charles

Sedley," (Sedley bowed low behind Alice for the compliment,) " who did not guess I knew him, and so began tormenting me ; and it was in raising my hand to reward his impertinence, that I was unfortunate enough to break the stem of that beautiful rose ; and, even now, though you are good enough to promise me another like it, I cannot but grieve sorely ; for, after all, it will not be *that* rose ; and my lady will be so vexed, for you know Master Eden, one does so prize even a flower given by those we love" — (here Alice's beauty deepened into a blush, and Master Eden breathed his spirit through a sigh) — " and I'm sure my lady *does* love Lord Ossory." —

This was said in a much lower voice than she had hitherto spoken in, but not low enough to escape Sedley's quick ear, who ground his teeth, and grasped his sword as he muttered, " *does* she?"

" How I hate this nasty Strand," said Alice, " it always reminds me of the

day we went to that wicked astrologer's in Tower-street, when my lady was so ill, and I was so frightened."

"And pray, Mistress Alice," enquired her companion, "may I ask what it was that frightened you?"

"Oh such a monster, I'm sure you'd have been frightened too, had you seen him, the ugliest and most deformed dwarf you can imagine; but what frightened me so, Master Eden, was, that when I turned to look at him a second time, his face was so handsome, and exactly like yours."

"I am sorry," said Eden Green, with a suppressed smile, "that any thing like me should have had the unhappiness to frighten you, mistress Alice."

"Oh no! not because it was like *you*," rejoined the damsel, "but because it showed that that wicked astrologer must have dealings with the old gentleman, to be able to make black appear white in that way."

The page was about to reply, when he found they had arrived at Craven-court, the residence of José Corvo, a place then situated nearly in the same spot where the street of that name now stands. It was a large, dark, gloomy looking square, inhabited solely by Jews and merchants trading to the Levant. Every house was a warehouse, before which appeared bales of goods and merchandize of every description, but the one occupied by Corvo differed from the rest in the magnitude of its size, and its external appearance of opulence. Notwithstanding it was a fine sunny morning, a lamp burnt over the entrance, nor was it by any means a superfluous appendage. But before we follow Alice and her friend Eden Green into the Jew's presence, we will give a short description of him and his house, which are both worthy of another chapter.

CHAP. VI.

IN the merry days of our Second Charles the Jews were a people held in great repute; or, in other words, (not to trench upon historical authority,) a race, of whose services the gallant cavaliers of the time stood often, and greatly in need. The “wise men of the east” were they commonly called, though it must be owned they were most impartial in their emigration, flocking from north, south, east, and west, and making the good city of London their rallying point; to sojourn in any other place was, in their opinion, like calculating time on Ahaz king of Judah’s dial, upon which the sun is said to have gone back fifteen degrees; but in the polished era which succeeded the Restoration, knavery itself wore a court dress, and vice hid

its cloven foot within one of Marot's* well turned red-heeled shoes. The very Israelites understood how to beggar a person with a degree of grace and high bearing that left him nothing — to complain of in mortgaging his last acre ; in short, to sum up every thing in one great and beautiful climax, *draining* in those days was effected *without dunning* ! People were ruined just as well, and as soon ; but the mechanism of the machinery that was to occasion their downfall, was not daily and hourly obtruded on their vision, but, alas ! for our degenerate times, the art of cheating politely, and the art of painting on glass, are alike lost ; arts lavished on such equally brittle materials, that no wonder they should both have perished with the past, and left nothing but their fame to posterity. Among the sons of Levi,

* A Frenchman, shoemaker to the court of Charles, and celebrated for the peculiar beauty of his square-toed shoes.

who practised the polite art in the year 1665, José Corvo stood pre-eminent; not from any intrinsic merit of his own, such as possessing more craft, more capital, or less conscience than his brethren, but from the circumstance of his having left the citron groves and spicy gales of Portugal, in the suite of Queen Catherine, to have the honour of becoming her majesty's perfumer in London; though why called simply "*perfumer*" is rather enigmatical, as *that* title *alone* is quite inadequate to convey an idea of the variety of his wares, or the multitude of his avocations. Every thing that necessity could want, or whim imagine, Corvo could supply; his riches increased daily, yet never was he known to importune his customers, from the highest to the lowest, for payment. On the contrary, a stranger would have imagined he was a philanthropist, who maintained at his own expense a vast bazaar (the focus of earth's treasures,) for the convenience of

his fellow-creatures ; notwithstanding this, it was computed that on the article of apricot paste alone, he made cent. per cent. At his warehouse were to be found the productions of every quarter of the globe ; agates from the river Achates, pearls from Balsora, and diamonds from Golconda ; here were piled the spices of Molucca, and the amulets of Arabia Felix ; there, breathed from gilded glass the Gulatter of the Persian rose ; while around bloomed flowers from the fairest gardens in England. Nor was he alone mindful of what might afford pleasure ; talismans, and antidotes, had he of all descriptions, from the simplest herb to the far-famed water of the fountain Acidalus, in Campania, which is said to restore even the blind to sight. Was it then to be wondered at that Corvo should rank among, not only the magnates of his tribe, but of the land ? Since whether it were to supply the diadem of the capricious monarch with new

jewels ; his favourites with auxiliaries to beauty ; his courtiers with money ; or Nell Gwynne's children with rattles and sweet-meats, he was always equally prompt, and equally indispensable. He was, moreover, a politician ; imported state secrets, with gloves, from France ; pipes from Germany ; furs from Russia ; wines from Spain ; and pistachio comfits from Italy. It is true, that this was a species of merchandize which required the exchange to be made in kind ; but which of the courtiers was there, whose discretion preponderated, when weighed in the balance against personal advantage or self-interest ? And even those who held the highest repute for reserve, in matters of a political nature, were not proof against the culinary perfection, and lavish hospitality of the Jew's suppers ; it was at these almost nightly banquets, that Corvo contrived to possess himself of every piece of state news, necessary to the success of his diplomatic

traffic, and the deepest secrets were soon extracted from the sagest heads ; filtered from all disguise, through wines of the most choice vintage, from every part of the globe, that could be cited as the birth-place of a single grape. Nor was it on the excellence of his cellar alone that he relied for initiating himself into the fate of nations ; Corvo had a daughter, one of those bright beings of the south, all light and bloom, like the sun, and flowers that shone and breathed over her own fair country ; large dark eyes had she, within whose depths the diamond sparkles seemed only flashing to illumine their dove-like softness ; a clear high forehead, rivalling Parian marble in its whiteness, as contrasted with the cloud of raven hair that shaded it ; a cheek, whose hues so changed, that none might determine which tint to call peculiarly its own ; a mouth, whose lips just parted like an opening rose-bud, displaying, like the flower, the matchless beau-

ties it contained within ; to this face was joined a figure that might have enriched sculpture, and defied criticism ; no wonder then, that on occasions where Corvo's money, and even wine failed, the pretty Maraquita had only to lend her countenance in order to succeed.

Among honest* José's acquirements, that of speaking English fluently was to be ranked. By "fluently," as it is here applied, we mean to his own perfect satisfaction and that of his auditors, who always understood his "*Yesh, fore Gosh, I will lant you de monish,*" to imply that he would accede to their request ; or his favourite benevolent simile of "*Yesh, yesh, I am goot to help de lame dogsh over de shtyles,*" to mean that he would extricate them from the difficulty, (of whatever nature it might

* Every body is aware, that Hebrew is always read backwards. In like manner is the word "*honest,*" when applied to a Jew, to be interpreted — *i. e. vice versa.*

chance to be,) that they were then entangled in.

To describe his shop or wareroom is not quite so easy a task, as it bore little resemblance to either, being a large saloon entirely lined with looking-glass, which reflected back the multifarious treasures it contained. The drapery (of which there was a profusion) was entirely composed of cashmere and Persian shawls, with other ladies' gear, which, as it disappeared, was instantly replaced. The floor was covered with Turkish carpets, and round the apartment ran a counter of ebony, inlaid with flowers of mother-of-pearl. Behind this counter, at the upper end of this immense room, sat, (like the presiding goddess of a modern French *café*,) the pretty Maraquita, whose empire extended over flowers, perfumes, trinkets, gloves, ribbons, and sweetmeats of every description. She was not, it is true, as good a linguist as her sire; no tongue knew she but her

native Portuguese; but she had eyes that spoke all languages, and she contrived to retail her father's wares to the full as advantageously (if not more so) than himself. She retained the ancient costume of her tribe, which was more in keeping with her style of beauty than any modern dress she could have adopted; her apparel, in its way, being always of the most costly materials.

Corvo himself undertook the more arduous department of lending money, vending shawls, disseminating coffee, and *hinting* at Tokay, which, in those days, was a contraband rarity. For this purpose, he generally took his station at the opposite extremity of the room, and there, in a long brocade garment, made after the Eastern fashion, a purple shawl round his waist, in guise of girdle, a sort of Armenian cap on his head, a long German pipe in his mouth, a beard which in length rivalled Aaron's, and a pair of embroidered yellow slippers, he sat on a

large three-cornered stool, with a low back to it, his arms folded, and leaning lazily on the counter, while he whiffed his pipe in the face of those who either came to purchase his wares, borrow money, or retail news, seldom condescending to rise, or alter his posture in the smallest degree, on the entrance of any customer whatsoever. And thus was he seated, and so was he employed, on the morning that Eden Green conducted Alice to his abode.

On arriving at his house, Sedley had taken advantage of the darkness of the passage to remain *perdu*, till he saw Alice and her companion come out ; and they, little dreaming that they were so watched, walked quietly on to the end of the passage, when Master Eden opened a door, which conducted them into Corvo's emporium of fancy and finery.

“ The first of the morning to you, Senor Corvo,” said the page, and was about to pass on, in order to woo the

pretty Maraquita out of a rose ; when the Jew actually took the pipe out of his mouth, and laid the end of it on Eden Green's shoulder, exclaiming,

“ Shtop, shtop, Mashter Paradishe, for vat you passh me sho quickly dish mornings ? have you no biddings for me from de goot lord your mashters ?”

“ None, Senor Corvo, an it please you ;” and again Master Eden made an attempt to proceed with his fair companion. But Senor Corvo was in a loquacious mood, and it might not be.

“ Vell, vell,” recommenced Corvo, pointing with his pipe to Alice, “ but vat pretty pieche of merchandize have you got dere ? ish it your own, or your mashter’s ?”

“ Mark me, you old sinner,” cried the indignant page, expanding almost into a giant as he spoke, “ it’s a pity but you knew yourself as well as *I* know you ; and then, perhaps, for very shame you might be more sparing of your jibes.”

Whatever retort this speech might have elicited from the Jew, was warded off by the entrance of a lady, who was laughing (*rather* loudly for a *lady*) at the antics of a little boy about four years old, who was running before her, and she appeared quite out of breath in running after him.

“ Ah !” cried Corvo, laying down his pipe, and stretching out his arms to the child, who scrambled up the counter, and got into them. “ Ah, Mishtress Gwynne ! I might have known you vash abroad dish morning de day be sho bright. I no ashk you *how* you do, for I shee you have shtolen all de roshes in my shop to put in your cheeks ; but *vat* can I have de pleasure to do for you to-day ?”

“ Oh, nothing for me,” said the breathless beauty, flinging herself into a seat ; “ but Charley there has been so rebellious this morning, and so over free with his prattle, that I had no escape but to

bring him here, for you to stop his mouth with comfits."

" And sho I vill, my littel king," said Corvo, kissing the child ; " and it vere hard if now that you have been tree daysh a dukesh, you should not have de besht shsweetmeatsh of any littel dukesh in de world."

Here his little Grace of St. Alban's burst into a most joyous laugh, (in which his mamma joined,) clapped his little hands, and then the Jew's face, somewhat more earnestly than the Senor Corvo either desired or deserved — at least from him. When the ducal pain had a little abated in his Mosaic cheeks, he again addressed Nell Gwynne.

" I tinksh, Mishtressh Gwynne, von littel cupsh of *Vervina* vould be no bad tingsh for you after valking ; and Mash-ter Paradishe," as he always called Eden Green, who now was busily employed at the other end of the room, selecting two of Maraquita's best roses, " and

Mashter Paradishe there yander can tell you it ish goot, goot, de besht in de world, do he doesh call me namesh, and it ish no goot to call namesh, ish it Mish-tressh Gwynne?"

"I don't know," said Nell Gwynne, smiling, and looking almost involuntarily at her son.

"Ah yesh, yesh, it be goot to call de namesh sometimesh, ven de namesh *be true*, vidout you call dish little king here the namesh, he no have de titlesh,* but for Master Paradishe, dere be no such luck in de namesh he call me."

"And pray, Senor Corvo, what names does he call you?"

"Vat namesh he callsh me? it vash only dish morningsh he call me an old shinner."

* Honest José, no doubt, alluded to the well known circumstance of Nell Gwynne's having called her son, in a pet, a little b—g—d; for which the king reproving her, she replied, "Well, I have no other name for him." The next day the child was created Duke of St. Alban's.

"I marvel then at your saying, Senor José, that there is no luck in his names."

"Vat you mean Mishtresh Gwynne, I no quite undershtand you?"

"Why you said just now," said Nell, with her wicked smile, "that names were good when they were true?"

"Ha! ha! Mishtresh Gwynne, I shee how it ish, you get up early to beguile kingsh vid your swheet fache, and banter poor Jewsh vid your sawchy vordsh."

"But where are my *tomfits*? dive me my *soogar pumbs*, or me 'll tell the king of oo, and he shall kill oo," screamed the little duke; and he enforced his threat with a few more blows on Corvo's cheek.

"Now fie, fie, Charley," cried his mother, lifting him from the counter, and placing him on the ground, "fie for a marred urchin as you are, I take shame for you."

"*That* you might have done long ago,

had you been so inclined," said Master Eden, *en passant*, as he left the shop with Alice, who looked as happy as Maraquita herself, and as blooming as the two roses she had given her. The Duke of St. Alban's, thus chastised, now set up a howl, that provoked his mamma to exclaim,

"I know who'll tell the king now, and then we'll see who'll be let to have any more comfits."

The child was awed at his mother's *daring* to threaten him, and staring at her for a minute or two, sobbed away his tears, and then turning on his heel, set off at full speed to the other end of the room, where he took possession of a large bunch of Maraquita's flowers, with which he strewed the floor in his return up the room, till his attention was arrested by some point collars, when he instantly flung down the stalks of the flowers, in order to equip himself in one of them, which he was so amused at

finding descended below his waist, that he ran back to his mother, laughing as violently as he had been crying the minute before, and telling her to see how funny he looked.

“Yes, yes, Charley, but now take it off, for we must be going.” And she tried, as she spoke, to disencumber him of his finery ; upon which the little duke again shed a torrent of tears, struggled to free himself from his mamma’s hands, vociferating that he would keep the collar, and no one should take it from him.

“But why, Charley, child,” urged his mother, “man’s gear looks senseless on an urchin of your inches, and such shoulder tire as that is only fit for big men.”

But Jerman, *Cesterfield*, and Kill-a-goose (as he always called Killigrew) are not big men, and dey wear ‘em, and so will me.”

“Out upon you for an unruly brat,” cried Nell Gwynne rising, and trying to

remove the collar forcibly from his neck, “but you are your father’s echo, that never wants a wise reason for a foolish action ; but I’d make you preach to another text an I had you beyond the reach of all your spoilers ;” saying which, the gentle Nell bestowed on her son one of those gifts generally known by the name of “a box on the ear,” and flinging her wimple somewhat abruptly on the carpet, flung *herself as* abruptly into a chair, leant back, fanned herself violently, stretched out her pretty little feet till they were almost in a horizontal position, and so contrived to display two critically well-turned ancles under the auspices of a pair of rose-coloured stockings.

“ Oh, Mishtressh Gwynne, you take von littel cup of *Kervina*, it be of de goot to you ; and you shall have it in von of de littel golt tulip cups dat my goot Lord Rochester have had made for to trink de Tokay.”

"No, no, not *Vervina*; Canary is more to my taste, Senor Corvo."

"Vell, vell, vid all my heart, vat you vill."

And honest José commanded one of his attendants to bring it and some fruit — a mandate which was instantly obeyed.

"Now," said he, filling a cup from a silver-wire flask, and presenting it to the nymph, who had again hung her fan round her left wrist, and extended her ungloved right hand to receive the wine; "now, if you do not shay dat the king even hash no Canary dat could passh for the broder to dish, I vill be content to trink vatersh and eat hamsh for de resht of my lifesh."

At the mention of these two things that he abominated equally, Corvo laughed long and loud. The last peal of this laugh had died away, the lady had raised the cup to her lips, when the door opened, and Sedley entered. No sooner had he made his

appearance than she replaced the untasted cup on the salver, and the Jew dismissed his smile, and resumed his pipe, which was, with him, resuming his dignity—an appendage he made it a point of never dispensing with, in the presence of any of his male customers; for though he was no niggard of his patronage and friendship to the king, and even the nobles, yet his faith *just* extended as far as the doctrine of *possibilities*, and therefore he felt that “Familiarity” *might* “breed contempt,” and so wisely resolved, in all audiences, whether private or public, to avert freedom and eschew condescension with his superiors; however he might deign to be facetious with his inferiors, towards his equals his bearing was a specimen of the happy medium, savouring not more of the one than of the other, but partaking equally of both.

Sedley, however, belonging to the first-mentioned class, Corvo, on his entrance, resumed (as we have before stated,) his pipe, or we might say his

sceptre, re-seated himself on his stool, flinging his right arm over the back of it, while his yellow-slipped right foot reposèd on the counter, which position caused his head to be rather averted; while his left shoulder, as well as the whiffs of his pipe, were in a direct line with Nell Gwynne's face. This attitude had the two-fold advantage of contributing to the worthy Senor's comfort, and at the same time doing away with any appearance he might have otherwise had of degenerating into attention towards his companion, who on her side had also some arrangements to make on the entrance of Sedley — such as disappointing the wine, by not allowing it to pass the ruby boundaries to which it had the moment before been raised ; again putting her fan in commission, and drawing her mask from her pocket, and holding it before her face, so as neither quite to see or be seen.

Sedley, affecting not to notice the

commotion his appearance had excited, approached leisurely at his usual loitering pace, adjusted his hair in a mirror as he passed, looked perfectly satisfied with his performance, saluted the Jew with a bow of the most profound respect, made a mock lunge at the Duke of St. Alban's with his ruby-hilted rapier, and then executed a graceful start, with a piano burst of pleasure and surprise at the sight of his mother, as though he had not perceived her till then, and considered it something wonderful his perceiving her at all.

“So early! and yet the sun risen!—the flowers awake, and the light of the world abroad, by mine honour, but ‘tis the fairest wonder these eyes ever beheld,” he exclaimed, bowing his essenced hair so low, that the chesnut curls almost kissed the rose-coloured hose of Nell Gwynne.

“Nay, now,” cried Nell, letting her words melt into a lisp, as was her wont

when she wished to be patrician, “me-thinks the *wonder* is, that *you* should be stirring while the day is yet so young, that the very air is *all* common, unredeemed by one gentle breath; so that a polite camelion might well sicken at such coarse food, or fast till he got better, and yet you can venture to inhale it.”

“Call you it unredeemed by *one* gentle breath, when you have just enriched it with words that might well be mistaken for whispers of the sweet south, or the sigh of flowers when the air has wooed them?” said Sedley.

A laugh, a shrug of the shoulders, and a tap of her fan on Sedley’s arm, was the lady’s only reply. She then rose to depart, as she drew her cloak and hood about her.

The Jew, without deigning to take the pipe from his mouth, or turn his head, said, “Vell, but Mishtressh Gwynne, you vill tashte my vinesh before you go?”

Saying which, he again offered her the

cup he had previously filled out, but she rejected it with an “Oh, fie! Senor Corvo, not of a morning ;” and wishing him a good day, took her son’s hand, nodded to Sedley, and withdrew : he measuring her with his eye till she shut the door, and the Jew, when she had shut it, repeating, “Oh fie, Senor Corvo, not of a morning. Ha, ha, ha! dat begoot.”

Sedley now walked to the other end of the room ; and after having spent half an hour in saying the sweetest things he could imagine, in the best Portuguese he was master of, to the pretty Maraquita, he entreated her to give him two moss-roses, that he at least might wear her emblem.

She gave them, and the blush that dyed her cheek as she did so, was deeper than the tint on the flowers.

He then said she must give him some blue ribbon to tie them with, as that colour was the symbol of constancy. He took care to arrange the flowers and the

ribbon precisely in the same manner as those which he had seen with Alice ; and placing them in his bosom, with innumerable protestations of admiration, vows of everlasting love, soft sighs, and tender glances, he breathed the most passionate adieu to the beautiful Jewess, and left her to pursue his way to the Mall ; a scornful bitterness curling his proud lip, and a malicious triumph sparkling in his eye, as though he had already drained the cup of vengeance to the dregs.

CHAP. VII.

SEDLEY pursued his way to the Mall, with that velocity of pace common to persons labouring under any species of mental excitement ; by the unhappy it is adopted, as if they thought it would enable them to walk away from themselves ; by the joyous, as if to reach the goal of some expected pleasure the sooner ; to those whose aim is vengeance, (as with Sedley,) it is the lightning with which a vulture darts upon its prey : with the speed he used, a few minutes sufficed to convey him from the Jew's house, and the gloomy court it was enclosed in, to the fresh Green Park, its bright sun, and its gay groups of courtiers, who were, with their joyous monarch, inhaling as much of the morning air as they deemed necessary to insure justice being

done to their noon-day repast. Sedley had his own reasons for not joining them as usual ; but at once directing his steps to a thickly shaded and unfrequented walk, became the solitary occupant of it ; it was not, however, so remote but that he had the full benefit of seeing and hearing all that occurred. “ Ha, old Rowly, so you have got the two paragons with you ; each equally laudable in their different way, and consequently worthy of *your* favour ; the one, the most accomplished scape-grace of his time, (always, my liege, as in duty bound, excepting your most gracious self,) the other, homered forsooth among the swinish multitude, who are, no doubt, the fitting judges of such mettle — the *most finished gentleman* of the time ! but we'll see if we cannot send some of his gentle blood into the thirsty ground — that the roots of these goodly oaks drinking of the purple stream may quaff such draughts of loyalty as shall send them

flourishing down to posterity, till every leaf becomes the herald of our *glorious reign!*" Such was Sedley's soliloquy, accompanied by his usual bitter laugh, as he descried the king at a short distance ; his cloak thrown back ; his hands behind him, and a smile on his countenance, as he appeared to divide his attention equally between Rochester on his right and Lord Ossory on his left ; at length he stopped, and laughed immoderately at something that Rochester had said ; and then, turning to Lord Ossory, held him by the collar of his cloak, and seemed to be interrogating him very earnestly about something.

" Ho ! is it so ?" said Sedley, " this will never do."

Saying which he left his retreat, and swinging the before-mentioned Restoration hankerchief in one hand, doffed his beaver with the other, as he hastily passed the king to join Miss Jennings and Miss Blague, whom he saw walking

at some distance. This manœuvre had the desired effect. The king, who otherwise would not have cared to have spoken to him, had his curiosity excited by the hurry Sedley appeared to be in ; and again stopping, and looking after him, said to his companions :—

“ How now, my lords ? Sir Charles Sedley seems in the mind this morning to make his presence as scarce as thy good behaviour, Rochester.”

“ Ay, truly, Sire,” replied the earl, “ and, perchance, for the same reason — that it is not over acceptable to your majesty.”

“ Well, well,” said the king, “ we will own, that thy bad behaviour has brought us much diversion, but remember, John, if this poor knight, this Sir Ambrose Templeton, should lay his death at thy door, it will be a mortal sin.”

“ I thought,” cried Rochester, “ your

majesty was for giving even the devil his due?"

"True, true, and therefore it is why I have given *thee* to him so often, Rochester."

The earl, for once in his life, had the good policy to bow, without uttering the retort which hovered on his lips — and the monarch continued : —

"But what can give such unusual speed to Sir Charles Sedley's movements? We would speak with him, but that he is now out of hearing."

"Nay, for that matter, he is easily recalled, if it is your majesty's pleasure that I should bear him a message to that effect?" said Rochester.

"Why no ; we would not thou shouldst go," said the king, "for considering how eager thou wert to anger him last night, not lacking courtesy, he might be equally prompt to repay thee this morning ; but my Lord of Ossory (who

is wont to make his zeal out-strip our wishes,) could do our bidding?"

Lord Ossory bowed, and withdrew in search of Sedley, who had now joined the two ladies ; he had to make nearly the tour of the park before he could overtake them ; and when he did, he had some difficulty in making either of the two recognise him, so amused did they appear with their own conversation ; at length, the pretty Jennings greeted him with her laughing blue eyes ; and after she had given him, and he had listened to, and promised to deliver a long message to Miss Hamilton ; he conveyed the king's commands to Sedley.

" Alas ! he little dreams," said the latter, " of the sacrifice I make in obeying him ; but now," he continued, taking Miss Jennings's hand, and pressing it to his heart, while he bowed to Miss Blague, " let who will doubt my loyalty, for I have proved it to the utmost."

Saying which he walked away with

Lord Ossory, who was not long in perceiving the chain and roses with which he was decorated. “Can it be,” thought he, “that Cordelia, even if she cares not for me, which she has but too well proved, would give *my* gifts to *him*? She need not trample on me, though she spurns me; yet, it was but last night, and I could have sworn she loved me; but women are so — what then, if her whole sex are false, *she is not; she cannot* be. ’Twere doubting heaven to suspect her — but then, again, these are the very flowers on which, not two hours since, I breathed out my very soul, and sent her. That chain, too — oh, she *did* love me when I gave her *that* — no, no, it cannot be — Sedley is a villain, who has wiles that would encompass earth — reach to heaven, and draw it down to hell.”

“Sir Charles Sedley,” said he, making a full stop opposite his companion; his brain maddening, his eye flashing, and his lip quivering as he spoke, “when

you have known the king's pleasure *I* would speak with you?"

"Loyally spoken," replied Sedley; "it is but meet that I should lend mine ear to our liege lord the king first, and after he has filled it as he listeth, I know no one whose service it will be more at than my Lord of Ossory's, especially when we have so long had to lament his absence."

"Doubtless it *must* have aggrieved Sir Charles Sedley much."

"Yes truly, for I would not miss the fashion," said Sedley, with his cold, taunting smile.

"I have not now time to compliment you on the adoption of it," said the young earl, with a bow as cold and ironical as Sedley's smile, "for the king is close at hand; but when he shall have satisfied his claims on your attention, I shall be happy to acknowledge this, with *some other obligations.*"

"Nay, unless obligations be born of

fancy, my lord, *you owe me none*,” replied Sedley.

“ The true test of generosity, to forget one’s own deeds,” said the earl, biting his lip as he stepped back, while Sedley bowed to the king, whom they had now come up with, and who was busily employed explaining to Rochester, and tracing in the gravel with the point of his sword, the plan of a new theatre.

“ A fair morning, and well met, or rather well caught, Sir Charles Sedley,” said he, desisting from his occupation, “ for you passed us anon with the speed of a lapwing.”

“ And it should seem,” interposed Rochester, who never could resist an opportunity of saying any thing which he thought would disconcert Sedley, and glancing at the relics of Lady Cordelia’s chain as he spoke, “ that his expedition was equally subterranean, though not for water, but ore.”

"Nay," said the king, "you, my lord, might have remembered that the sylphs do not use him so ill, that he should be compelled to fly to the gnomes to forge his chains."

"Alas! Sire," said Sedley with a bow and a shrug, "the saying runs that '*wits have short memories,*' and it must be true; for did not your majesty belong to the order, you would doubtless have remembered it."

"Nathless," replied Charles; "*Lingua mali pars pessima servi,* and why remember its offences?"

"Truly," said Rochester, "but that is spoken with wisdom, and worthy your majesty's all-gracious self."

"Except," rejoined the king, "when a goose taketh a goose's quill to perpetuate the offences of the tongue, *then* they need somewhat of punishment, if it were but for the sake of example."

"*Somewhat* of punishment, Sire!" said Rochester, bowing to the very

ground, “with all due deference to your royal judgment, it merits the *greatest*, even that of not seeing your majesty’s countenance for three long months, which is like living without the sun for the same space of time. But, for *examples*,” (and his voice and manner involuntarily changed as he spoke to his usual jibing tone),” —

“Doubtless, you would say,” interrupted the king, “that, though *never* a *model*, you have *often* been an *example*.”

A laugh from all present followed this speech, which was increased by Sedley’s leaning forward towards Rochester, and with a mock air of great solicitude, begging he would take his place, and stand more in the shade, as he feared the *sun* might be too much for him. Whatever reply the earl might have made, was prevented by the king’s turning to Sedley, from whom he was anxious to know the cause of the haste he had appeared in a short time ago, and saying —

"But we detain you, Sir Charles Sedley, and considering the haste you seemed in just now, this is scarcely fair."

Sedley assured him that he had no particular reason for walking so quickly, beyond the wish to overtake Miss Jennings and Miss Blague, whom he perceived at some distance.

Seeing that this answer had quite dispelled the king's curiosity, he made his congé, and passed on. Lord Ossory, whose eye had been fixed on him, or rather on the flowers and chain he wore, the whole time he was speaking to the king, was not long in following him. This, Sedley was aware of, and listened to the echo of the footsteps behind him with a fiendish joy, arising from the hope that either those or his own would soon be still for ever. When he came to the entrance of the thickly shaded walk, which he had occupied on first coming to the park, he leant against a tree, as if fatigued from the haste with which he

had walked, and then affecting surprise at seeing Lord Ossory, (who had stopped when he stopped, and who was gazing at him, as though the resentment of his looks had robbed him of speech,) bowed slightly, as if he thought the earl would pass on, and then exclaiming, like one seized with a sudden fit of remembrance, —

“ Oh true, your lordship bespoke mine ear when the king had done with it ; and as I must be brief, I would know your pleasure as soon as may be.”

“ And I, Sir Charles Sedley,” replied the earl, “ would know how that chain and those flowers came into your possession ? and that too, without equivocation or delay.”

“ Nay,” cried Sedley, “ produce your search warrant ; tell me by what authority you demand such information, and *then*, and not till *then*, I may give it you ?”

"By the authority of truth and justice," said the earl.

"By the same authority I refuse to answer any interrogations that curiosity may dictate, and impertinence demand."

"This is base and paltry equivocation," muttered the earl.

"For that matter," said Sedley, with a look of the most goading insolence, while he deliberately unfolded his arms, and took the flowers from his vest with one hand, (swinging them so as to scatter the leaves in all directions,) and twisting the chain backwards and forwards with the other—"for that matter, though the days of chivalry *be past*, I deem not so lightly of a lady's fame as to scatter it to the winds; nor am I, albeit, so unused, or so undeserving of a lady's favour, as to make the town crier herald forth my good fortune; *this*, my lord, may perhaps be sufficient explanation of what you are pleased to call my equivocation."

"Base, cowardly villain," exclaimed the earl, grasping his sword.

"Ha! say you so," said Sedley, whose countenance assumed the look of a demon, "there is but one thing can thank you for *that* title, and it *shall*—" he added, drawing his rapier, which scarcely glittered for an instant in the air, before it passed into the side of the young earl, who sank lifeless from the loss of blood. Sedley stirred not, but stood with his eyes fixed on his victim, panting like a tiger over his prey, and was only aroused by a crowd gathering towards the spot, and Andrew Wilford among them pressing forward, and exclaiming vehemently,

"How now, my lord! — Sir, what's this? murder, by the law! treason, by the statute! The king (God bless him!) not yet left the Mall; that his royal eyes should witness so foul a deed! that the flower of England's nobles should lay dead, e'en in the sunshine of a summer

day — and you, Sir Charles Sedley — oh shame! — shame! — If such was your ambition, you might have come by a *bloody hand* in a less worthless way.” Here honest Andrew uttered almost a scream of horror, as he felt (which his eloquence had not allowed him to do before) the noble blood of the house of Ormond trickling on his foot from the reeking weapon Sedley still held. At this the crowd began to press more closely round the spot, and to manifest greater symptoms of abhorrence towards Sedley, who, nevertheless, did not attempt to move, till feeling his cloak violently pulled two or three times, he at length turned slowly round to discover who had taken such a liberty with him; when he perceived Master Upton (who, to do him justice, had never lost sight of his master, from the time he had left home in the morning till the present moment.)

“ Fly! fly! for your life, Sir,” said he, breathless from hurry and trepidation.

tion, “the king himself is hastening to the spot ; he will be here on the instant, and then you are lost ! — Here,” he continued, drawing a key from his vest, “this will open for you the subterraneous door that leads through the Park to York Gate ; once there, you are not a stone’s throw from Westminster Stairs, where you have only to inquire among the bargemen for my kinsman, one Gerald Fairfax, master of the Royal Kate, and he will drop down the river with you to Gravesend in no time ; and there are always plenty of smacks there, ready to slip their cables, that would run you over to France before the Lieutenant of the Tower had time to read his majesty’s orders, to send his merry men in pursuit of you.”

Sedley, however, did not appear inclined to profit by this friendly advice, for he remained immovable ; nor did he even acknowledge it further, than by bestowing a smile on the donor, some-

what more kindly than usual. Upton had not time to reiterate his counsel, for he was carried away with the crowd, which was falling back to make way for the king, who was, as he had predicted, close at hand. On arriving at the spot, which was now literally dyed in blood, Charles gazed for a few moments with unaffected sorrow on the lifeless but beautiful form of the most accomplished young man of his day, and dashing away a tear, (which, as it fell, mingled with that blood which had ever been freely shed in the cause of the Stuarts,) himself stooped to assist in raising him.

“ Mind you, my lords,” said he, when he saw the young earl placed in the hands of Lords Shaftesbury, Arlington, Chesterfield and Rochester, who had volunteered their services to convey him home, “ mind ye that he be cared for at the palace, and that this sad event (which may not be altogether fatal) on no account reach the ear of our gallant

friend the Duke of Ormond, till we ourselves shall disclose it to him at a more fitting season, when God grant, we may have some good tidings to mingle with the bad. See that the leeches do their duty, and that he want for nothing—we ourselves will watch the result."

Sedley, during this scene, remained standing, his head uncovered, his eyes fixed on the ground, and his left arm a-kimbo; while his right hand still retained the blood-stained sword, the point of which rested on his foot.

When the king had watched the group which bore Lord Ossory out of sight, he turned to Sedley, and having ordered Andrew Wilford to take his sword from him, said, "Whatever may have stirred Sir Charles Sedley to so ill a deed as the shedding of blood, almost as noble as our own, he should have chosen a fitter time and place; but we speak not now of the disrespect evinced to ourselves, *that* is forgotten in the magnitude of our sor-

row for its consequences. But we dispense with Sir Charles Sedley's presence at Whitehall ; and moreover find him apartments in our Tower of London, till it may be known what further shall befall our gallant young friend."

Saying which, he walked away towards the palace amid the acclamations of the multitude, leaving Sedley in the custody of Andrew Wilford and one of his brother pages, till a party of the king's body-guard could turn out to escort him to the Tower.

When the mob had in some degree dispersed, Master Upton protruded his head from a tree behind which he had taken refuge ; and, seeing the coast clear, walked sorrowfully up to his master, and with many a piteous look and desponding shrug, said, " Ah, Sir, had you followed your poor servitor's advice, this would not have happened."

" Peace, knave," cried Sedley ; " but,

no, thou meant me well, and it shall not go unrequited.”

“ Nay, nay,” said Andrew Wilford, “bewray thy meaning as thou wilt, Master Upton, it would not have been seemly in a gentleman of Sir Charles Sedley’s bearing, to have evitated his sovereign’s just resentment, by fleeing like a thief in the night.”

“ For that matter,” rejoined Master Upton, “ there was no night in the case, for it was broad day-light. But I do not pretend, my *Lord Wilford*, to understand these court points as well as you; all I know is, that where there is danger (as it is never likely my head should save my heels,) I always make it a rule that my heels shall save my head; so that, albeit, unlike the rest of our texters, you see I practise what I preach.”

“ Ay, marry do you,” said Wilford, “ as far as *that* goes; but, for my part, I should dread having suitably light fingers imputed to such a light pair of heels.”

Sedley, who grew impatient at the bandying of invective between these menials, was not sorry to see the guard advancing that was to conduct him to the Tower; and merely waiting to give some orders to Master Upton, he resigned himself to the officer, and walked quietly in the centre of the guard as far as Westminster-stairs, where they embarked for the Tower.

On stepping into the boat, he again turned to his valet, and said in a low voice, “Good Upton, be sure you let your news be of the soonest, how the stripling at Whitehall gets on, that I may know whether I am in arrears to conscience, or it to me.”

Master Upton promised; and Sedley sprang into the boat, which instantly pushed off, and was not long in conveying him to the Tower.

On landing, he was conducted up two or three flights of narrow, dark stairs, and ushered into a gloomy and not very

spacious room, with a high octagon ceiling. Over the chimney-piece figured, in gold letters, and on two separate slabs of black marble, the names of the conspirators engaged in the gunpowder plot ; which, after having leisurely perused, he as leisurely placed his beaver on the table, looked at his hands, and, turning up his cuffs, begged he might have some water ; and then flung himself into the deep recess of the old window-seat which looked out upon the water ; and there we shall for the present leave him to his meditations.

The events of this morning it was, which, having reached Lady Cordelia, had thrown her into the state that had been described to Lady Berry, in answer to her message.

CHAP. VIII.

SIX weeks had now elapsed since the events recorded in the last chapter. Sedley still remained in the Tower, though Lord Ossory had long been pronounced out of danger ; and was now almost in a state of perfect convalescence ; and had been, for more than a fortnight, removed from the palace to his father's house. The king, during his illness, had evinced the greatest solicitude respecting him ; but now that he was recovered, would not see him, and intimated much displeasure towards him as well as Sedley on account of their *melée* in the park ; nor was the good Duke of Ormond's loyalty slow in keeping pace with the monarch's anger towards his son ; and though the latter lacked neither affection to his father, nor respect to his sovereign, yet did

he appear perfectly happy under the weight of their joint displeasure. We are afraid, that we must further confess, that he would even *willingly* have incurred the displeasure of twenty fathers, and as many monarchs, could it have procured him, as in the present instance, a conviction of his being loved by her whom *he* loved beyond the whole world. It is true, that his wound had been most carefully and scientifically tended by the most renowned physicians, who did not fail to impute the speediness of his recovery to their own skill ; doubtless, much of its merit was theirs ; but it is not quite certain whether *their* specifics would have been so *very* efficacious, had not the most beautiful eyes in the world watched over him ; and a form that was even more than beautiful to him, been ever by to anticipate his slightest wish ; in short, had not Miss Hamilton declared, that she had no natural genius for managing invalids, and so delegated

her office to the Lady Cordelia ! Yes, it was even so ; and having discovered (for lovers have a most unaccountable knack of making discoveries,) that she really loved him ; that she had never loved any one else, and that none of his letters had reached her (which he afterwards further discovered, Lady Dorset had intercepted) ; he grew better with surprising rapidity ; yet was he unwilling to own himself perfectly recovered, or rather he could not bring himself to relinquish the privileges and immunities his malady secured for him, of receiving and giving glances that penetrated into the innermost recesses of that heart, whose secrets were the knowledge for which he thirsted ; the discovery of which enabled him to extract the very essence of those feelings he himself had caused ; — as sunbeams expand a flower, on whose folds their glowing warmth is pressing, and then inhale the sweets themselves have created. But we profess ourselves altogether un-

skilled in matters of this nature ; and therefore, for fear of exposing our ignorance to the more practised and scientific portion of our readers, we will confine ourselves to the simple narration of facts. Lord Ossory had been impatiently walking up and down the saloon, looking at the window, then at the door ; talking to Miss Hamilton ; standing still ; then sitting down ; in short, manifesting every possible species of impatience it was possible to conceive ; for it was long past the hour at which Lady Cordelia usually came to visit him.

“ Really,” said Miss Hamilton, laughing, “ if you would but sit still for five minutes, dear coz., I’d sing you a most appropriate ditty, one of Thomas Lodge’s*, which Corbeta has set to music for me — shall I ?”

“ What a question ? I shall be so much obliged to you, ma belle Elise,” said the earl, handing her a guitar.

* A poet in the reign of Elizabeth.

" Well, mind that you listen *very* attentively, for I never sing to deaf people ; and you know, none so deaf as those that will not hear," said she, as she ran over a slight prelude, and then sang the following song : —

" Love in my bosom, like a bee,
Doth sucke his sweete ;
Now with his wings he plays with me,
Now with his feete.

Within mine eyes he makes his neste,
His bed amid my tender breaste ;
My kisses are his daily feaste,
And yet he robs me of my reste !

Strike I my lute, *he* tunes the string ;
He music plays if I do sing ;
He lends me every thing,
Yet cruel — he my heart doth sting.

What, if I beat the wanton boy
With many a rod ?
He will repay me with annoy ;
I dread his nod.

Then sit thou safely on my knee,
And let thy bower my bosom be ;
Cupid ! so thou but pity me,
I will not wish to part from thee."

As she concluded the last stanza, the door opened, and a “Brava! brava! cara bella!” issued from a low voice — Lord Ossory raised his eyes; it was only — the Duke of Buckingham.

“Now, verily,” said he, seating himself as he spoke, “if the lady did not look a little less disappointed at seeing me, than the gentleman does, I should e’en be for making my greetings and adieus in one breath — however,” continued he, smiling, “the offence of your cold looks, young earl, will not rankle in my heart, for I carry my revenge with me, that is, I am the bearer of bad tidings — at least of the report of them.”

“Will not your grace name them?” asked Lord Ossory.

“Ay, that will I; but will *your* lordship be so ready to hear them?”

“I know not, till I *have* heard them,” replied the earl.

“Why, they concern you,” continued

the duke, folding his arms, raising his eye-brows, and looking round the room.

“ You but increase my eagerness to hear them, be they what they may,” said the earl.

“ The king is most exceeding angered against you,” said Buckingham, laconically ; again looking round the room, and swinging one foot as he spoke.

“ Nay, I knew before that I laboured under that misfortune,” replied the earl.

“ And do you likewise know the punishment he has assigned for you ?” asked the duke.

“ Perhaps the Tower ?”

“ Nay, that were nothing ; guess again.”

“ Banishment from court, for — ”

“ That still were light in comparison to the reality.”

“ It is too great then for me to imagine, for I cannot guess it,” said the earl, smiling.

“ You are right to smile now,” cried the duke, “ for I promise, you will find

it hard to smile hereafter. Why, man, he means to sacrifice thee at the shrine of Plutus ; to fetter thee with the chains of Hymen ; to inflict on thee a wife ; in short, to marry you !”

“ To marry me !”

“ Even so ; first, he conceives that no other punishment would be adequate to your offence ; secondly, that from its magnitude, *you* are bound to make him any atonement *he* may think proper ; but the last and chief motive is, that a man whom he has been all his life paying court to, and yet whom he cannot get to *his* court, has a daughter whom he has discovered does you the honour of entertaining a partiality for you, and he thinks to reconcile all interests by making you marry her ; and, above all, to please your father, as she is extremely rich.”

“ My father ! (exclaimed the Earl,) I am sure *he* will never be accessory to any tyranny of the sort. But pray *who* is

this person that I am to be *made* to marry?"

"Nay, be not too sure of any thing," said the duke, with the most provoking calmness; "your father, on the contrary, highly approves of the plan, and says the king is infinitely too good to make you such a return for your breach of all etiquette and disrespect towards him; but for the lady, I am not at liberty to tell her name."

"I would do much," said the earl, walking up and down, while his eye flashed, and his cheek glowed, "I would do much to serve my king, or please my father, and that they both know full well; but by Heaven I swear —"

"Do not swear," interrupted Buckingham, laying his hand upon Lord Ossory's arm, "you know not what rash things oaths are, and how soon you may wish to recall them."

"Besides," said the beautiful Hamilton, whose amazement had prevented

her speaking before, “ I am sure my uncle never will force Ossory to marry against his will — it is so unlike him.”

“ That I know nothing about,” replied the duke, “ but it is e’en as I tell you ; he is marvellously pleased at the notion of this marriage.”

“ It is true,” said the earl, “ I have not of late had much intercourse with my father, and that he has avoided, and evinced much displeasure towards me ; but he cannot within so short a time be so totally changed ; he will at least hear me, and when I tell him that I will do any thing else he or the king may demand, but that no power on earth shall ever force me to this marriage ; he surely will not, cannot urge it, or if he does, why then we part for ever.”

“ Bravely mouthed, at all events,” said Buckingham, “ but I should advise — ”

However, before he had time to advise any thing, the door opened, and the Duke of Ormond appeared. After he

had kissed his niece, and shaken hands with Buckingham, he turned to his son and said —

“ My lord, your late conduct has left me no great room for the pride I have hitherto felt in you. Brawls in the public Mall, in the very presence of your king, what could the commonest blood do more? But let that pass; it is not for me to judge you; he whom you have so much offended, in his merciful care of your health, would not that you should go to him, but will be here anon, to let you know his pleasure, and it is *mine*, that you in all things obey it.”

The earl was about to reply, when a great commotion was heard in the ante-room; the doors were thrown open, and the king himself entered, appareled in a suit of purple velvet; his cloak, which was lined with white satin, and embroidered both inside and out with a deep border of golden oak leaves, was thrown back so as to display the jewelled orders

that he wore ; the cloak itself was tied with a gold cord, and tassels in the form of thistles ; the downy part of which was imitated by (what singly would have been impalpable) gold threads, but which united, appeared, with every movement of their wearer, like floating sun-beams ; in his hat, which was also of violet coloured velvet, were three snow white plumes, fastened with a diamond loop and button ; his hose were of white silk, broidered with gold clocks ; his square, high-heeled shoes were of white kid, with purple rosettes ; in the centres of which sparkled and fluttered a small diamond butterfly ; a pair of white military gloves, with purple and gold tops, completed his attire, with which it was evident some pains had been taken. Besides the rapier he wore, he carried one in his hand, as well as a large packet, carefully sealed. Buckingham, the Duke of Ormond, and Miss Hamilton, advanced to meet him ; he had no sooner returned

their salutations, than turning to Lords Arlington, Rochester, Dorset, and Killigrew, who accompanied him, he said,

“ My lords, we will dispense with your attendance, till we further require it.”

Upon which they withdrew to the ante-room, and Charles walked to the upper end of the saloon, and took possession of a chair ; at the back of which Buckingham stationed himself, while the Duke of Ormond remained standing in the front, awaiting the king’s commands. When the latter had leant back, taken off his hat, and given it to the Duke of Bucks to hold, — placed the sword he held across the chair before him like a barrier ; advanced his right foot, rested his right hand on the arm of the chair, and placed his left in his bosom ; he looked round the apartment, and addressing the Duke of Ormond, said : —

“ Though we are too much beholden to your grace, to peril aught that belongs to you, especially the health of

your son, and therefore would not let him come to us, lest he *should* endanger it, yet, as his late conduct merits some chastisement, we have come here to inflict it, and, therefore, would speak with him ; where is he, my lord ?”

Lord Ossory, who had been standing in the recess of a window, at the king’s entrance, needed no further summons, but came forward, and throwing himself at the monarch’s feet, there awaited in silence his commands.

“ Young man,” said he, “ it is not for Charles Stuart to deal harshly with any one of your name — *your* house has ever been the best friend of *mine*; and even *you*, though so few years have conferred on you the honour of belonging to it, have yet, before this, done me good service — and what gratitude cannot repay, at least ingratitude shall not cancel.” He paused for a moment, and then continued — “ We are the more inclined to judge leniently of your offence, in con-

sideration of your never (during the last six weeks) having tried to evitate any blame that might befall you, by transferring the sins of aggression, and such like, to Sir Charles Sedley, whom we are prone to believe, from all we have gathered of the circumstances, might be entitled to them ; therefore, my lord, with the first portion of our favour, we restore you your sword, which we hope *you* will never have cause to wield, as your father has so often, and so successfully done his — we mean in our defence ; but should such need ever arrive again, we know that it will not rust in its scabbard.” As he took the sword from across the chair, and was about to gird it round the young earl — he suddenly stopped, and exclaimed — “ But no — *this* has already proved an unlucky servant ; suppose we exchange, my lord ? ” he added, unfastening his own diamond hilted rapier, and girding it round the earl — “ Here’s one that will guide you

to better fortune ; at least, if it has aught of the donor's temper in it ; and now to show you that we have not, in any way, lost sight of your interests, we will bestow upon you a wife, who shall enact the part of guardian angel, as your own seems to have given up his garrison, thus to let you risk your name and fame in highway brawls under our very eyes ; nay, never look so very pale and woful ; odds fish ! but that we know the race from whence you sprung, we should be apt, by this light, to misjudge you a coward — though we must own, the knell that rings out in that word wife *is* enough to encompass e'en the stoutest hearts with fear ; but all things have their exceptions, and, in good sooth, the lady we have chosen for you, my lord, might bear the name of wife without appearing less charming for it, even in the eyes of her husband. She is rich as Croesus ; beautiful as an houri ; sage as Pallas ; belongs to a house, noble as your

own, and above all, may, I have no doubt, be prevailed upon to accept of you for a lord and master. What say you, my lord? are you not all impatience to behold her?"

"Sire," replied the young earl, with a pale cheek, but firm voice, "unable as I am to express my sense of the favours — favours as great as they are undeserved, which you have just conferred on me, I must, I fear, in the very act of acknowledging them, again incur your majesty's displeasure, from which they have so generously absolved me; but I solemnly declare that I cannot, on any account, marry this lady; aught else that your majesty can command, I shall have but too much happiness in obeying — even at the expense of my life."

"How!" cried the king, "not have her? out upon all such unsight, unseen prejudices. I tell you, were you once to behold her, you would hang yourself for very grief were she to refuse you. On

this I would lay the best thing in my kingdom."

"I am quite ready," said Bucking-ham, stepping forward with the most ludicrous expression of countenance imaginable, "I am quite ready to be wagered on any stake your majesty may choose to risk me, particularly on *this*, as I am completely of the same opinion ; so much so, that I would bet a crown, even yours, Sire, of the fact."

"It can be easily decided," rejoined the king, "if our good friend Ormond would bring hither the lady, who is at no greater distance than one of the adjoining rooms."

The duke bowed and withdrew.

"I am sorry," said Lord Ossory, as the door closed on his father, "that your majesty should have willed it so, as I must needs be forced to be what I would not willingly be for the world, wanting in common gallantry to this lady."

"So then," replied the king, "you

still persist in your determination of not having her."

"I do, Sire."

"Note what he says, Buckingham."

"Such resistance to your majesty's wishes is truly disloyal and appalling," said the duke, with a shrug.

"And should be dealt with accordingly," rejoined the monarch, "but that such conduct brings its own punishment along with it."

"You speak truly, Sire," said the earl; "for it is indeed a punishment to run counter to the slightest of your majesty's wishes."

"You may chance to think so before you are much older," replied Charles, with a frown. And he had scarcely spoken, ere the Duke of Ormond returned, leading in a lady, but so closely veiled from head to foot, that it was impossible to descry even the outline of her figure.

"Lady," said the king, rising, and ad-

vancing to meet her, “we give you welcome, though we grieve to say that we had so far mistaken the characters of some persons, as to have been on the verge of bestowing you on an ingrate; but he has saved us from that sin, by positively refusing to accept of you. Is it not so, my lord? — deny it if you can.”

“I am sure this lady, be she whom she may,” said the earl, “would never deign to accept a heartless hand — and that is all *I* have to bestow.”

The lady bowed her head in token of assent.

“Well, then,” said the king, “but one more chance remains — this lady shall unveil; and after that we give you twenty-four hours to decide between espousing her, or never seeing our face again, my Lord of Ossory.”

The earl cast down his eyes, and sighed heavily, while the king himself proceeded to unveil the lady.

“My Lord of Ossory,” said he, in an

authoritative tone, when he had done so, “we command you to raise your eyes, and take your choice of dwelling on this face for ever, or of never seeing ours more !”

The young earl obeyed, and in raising his eyes, met those of — Lady Cordelia Trevillion — even his own Cordelia. He turned towards the king, and tried to speak, but could not. Charles looked for a moment on the group before him.

Lord Dorset, who had re-entered the room with his daughter, and who was now standing by the Duke of Ormond, turned away to hide the tear he could not repress.

“I cannot now stay,” said the king, raising Lady Cordelia and her lover, who were at his feet, “to hear my friend Ossory here read his recantation ; but if, at the end of the four-and-twenty hours I have given him for considering time, he can do so with a safe conscience ; our worthy prelate, Master Roger Boyle,

shall confirm him in his new way of thinking. And now," he continued, placing Lady Cordelia's hand in Lord Ossory's, and pressing them both within his own, "we will leave you to make the best of the penance we have assigned you, and e'en go and give orders for the release of that poor devil Sedley, who must be heartily tired of the attractions of four walls by this time ; so much so, that we do not think he will be in any hurry again to assert his title to this lady."

"Or if he does," said the Duke of Bucks, "like Macbeth, he must spill much more blood ere he can make his title good."

"My Lord Dorset," resumed Charles, "though our court has hitherto possessed few attractions for you, we hope that henceforth its being indebted to you for one of its greatest," he bowed to Lady Cordelia as he spoke, "will be an inducement to you to frequent it oftener."

And then, turning to Lady Cordelia,

he presented her with the sealed packet he held in his hand, and withdrew, accompanied by the Duke of Ormond and Lord Dorset.

The packet was directed in Lady Dorset's hand, addressed to her daughter, with the proviso of its never being opened but in the event of Mr. Trevillion's death, and Lady Cordelia's marrying again. It contained, in fact, all Lord Ossory's intercepted letters, and a full confession on the part of the countess, which she sent to the king a few hours before her death, begging of him never to deliver it but on either of the above mentioned occasions.

Lady Cordelia withdrew, with Lord Ossory, to peruse them ; and, when they were gone, Rochester entered, and much to the amusement of Miss Hamilton and Buckingham, seated himself in the king's chair ; and, mimicking him to the life, re-acted the scene which had just taken place, by bestowing on his trusty page,

Eden Green, the pretty blushing Alice ;
with this slight variation, that instead of
presenting the damsel with a sealed
packet, he presented her with a heavy
purse.

CHAP. IX.

A
MIDST the gay circles in which Rebecca mixed, she never lost sight of her pious and early friend the prioress, from whom she continually received admonitory letters. She trembled for the consequence of the allurements perpetually thrown in her way. Though Rebecca was very guarded in the account she gave of her present mode of life, and her introduction into the brilliant court of Charles, yet Constance quickly perceived that London was not without powerful attractions; and she was by no means satisfied with the very animated description which she gave of Lady Cordelia Trevillion, whom she considered a very dangerous associate for the young, unsophisticated Rebecca.

But the time now rapidly approached,

when she was to be taken for ever, in all probability, from this bewitching scene — torn from the friendship of Lady Cordelia, whose society would no longer lend a charm to all around her. True, she was soon to be united to the object of her early love ; her tenderness was at length to be rewarded ; all her miseries were over ; happiness already beamed in her face, lightened her step, gladdened her heart ; and that false gaiety, she at times had assumed, was now softened into a chaste sprightliness, that proclaimed care was unknown. When Rebecca beheld the growing felicity of Lord Ossory and Lady Cordelia, she thought of her own with Sir John Berry, and could not help sighing at the recollection. She was again seemingly an outcast in the world ; she had found an anchor in Lady Cordelia to rest on ; for how could she assimilate with Sir Ambrose, whose multiplied years, morose temper, and bad opinion of her own sex, robbed her of all

confidence? and where there is no confidence there can be no real love. She now would have full leisure to draw a dangerous comparison between him and others. She checked herself when so inclined; she felt that it was improper, and endeavoured, by self-control, to fulfil the duties of a wife with meekness and submission.

A week previous to Lady Cordelia's nuptials was the period fixed for Sir Ambrose's and Rebecca's final departure from London. Lady Berry in vain endeavoured to assume a cheerful aspect; her removal proved a severe trial; the more so, as her husband preserved the most provoking silence respecting the place of their destination, which might be to the deserts of Siberia, for aught she knew.

She was sitting one morning pensively at the window, with an absent gaze at the passing objects in the Mall, when Lady Cordelia broke in upon her. She stood for some minutes anxiously regard-

ing Rebecca, who, as she breathed a heavy sigh, wiped away her flowing tears.

She coloured when she saw Lady Cordelia, and tried to conceal that she was weeping.

“This will never do,” she exclaimed, taking Rebecca’s hand.

“It is very weak in me,” Lady Berry replied, as she smiled through her tears ; “forgive me.”

“I’ll forgive you, if you promise not again to mistake the month, by giving me alternate sunshine and showers, with such a true April face, in so radiant an atmosphere, when all around breathes happiness to mortal eye.”

“Would,” cried Rebecca, in a desponding tone, “that I were permitted to breathe it too !

“Sir Ambrose,” she continued, “will not tell me where he intends taking me. I confess this terrible banishment from my country and my friends requires more firmness than I possess to support

myself without repining ; at this moment, too, when, dear Lady Cordelia, to have witnessed your nuptials with Lord Ossory would have made me so happy."

" Well, Rebecca, you must even imagine my happiness ; and be assured, imagination cannot paint it too highly, if I know Lord Ossory, and if I know myself, which, by the way, is the most difficult of all things to know."

" Do you remember," she proceeded, " those prophetic lines you, a short time since, made on me, which I have superstitiously treasured up in my heart ; they were so pretty, and ran thus :—

" Again I look'd beyond a few short years,
And happiness had chased away the tears
Of this bright creature. —————
All she had known of sorrow past away,
Like night clouds yielding to a summer's day ;
Affection that had wander'd through the guile
Of foes, return'd to cheer her with a smile."

After a considerable pause, she added,
" Well ! as I said before, you must

even imagine my happiness till you come back, and be a witness. I have been wasting my words for this last hour on Sir Ambrose, in vain, on the barbarity of taking you away, and he has given the death-blow to my vanity, in denying my request, having piqued myself so much on my art of persuasion, that even the impenetrable Sir Ambrose could not resist me, is very mortifying; but he is incorrigible."

"Ah! I know it," returned Rebecca, mournfully; "but did you learn where we are going?" she eagerly demanded.

"What a goose-like question," said Lady Cordelia, half smiling. "He is too wary, my dear child, to disclose a matter of such importance, fancying, as he does, there are half a hundred knights errant ready to travel after you, and carry you back, per force, to our gay court. For he shrewdly suspects, and not unnaturally, that so much youth and beauty was formed to pass more current

in the world than his miserly disposition is inclined to suffer."

"I even pleaded that he would only stay till after my marriage, but no, no, was the definitive and only odious word he uttered. Therefore, poor dear Rebecca, you must put the most cheerful face upon it, and follow your destiny, even should it be to Zembla's frozen regions; where not even your heart can freeze, though his is frozen already."

Rebecca could only weep; there was too much truth in Lady Cordelia's badinage, not to sensibly affect her, though before she departed, she used all those persuasive powers of which the moment before she had vainly boasted to soothe and comfort Lady Berry.

Too soon the sad hour arrived which was to separate the friends, when Rebecca bade adieu to all the splendour and allurements of Whitehall. The night before she had taken a melancholy farewell of Lady Cordelia, whose grief at

Lady Berry's departure would have been equal to her own, if it had not been softened by the bright prospects which shone before her, and the tender assiduities of Lord Ossory, who was seldom absent, and who seemed but to live in her society.

Sir Ambrose took a civil leave of the Duke of Buckingham and Sir Charles Sedley, who wore a sort of proud triumph in his manner since his rencontre with Lord Ossory. He fain would have poured a libation of compliments into Lady Berry's ear, but she despised his insidious arts, and met him with a cold reserve, so repulsive that he soon took leave.

Various were the questions asked of Sir Ambrose's domestics, where their master was going; and why he so suddenly left London? A question it was impossible to solve, for they were quite in the dark, and not a little curious to fathom his motive for so hasty a removal.

When Buckingham and Rochester surmised that Sir Ambrose was actually leaving his house, in consequence of some superstitious foreboding of future evil, they began to be sorry for the lengths they had gone in instigating him, from jealousy and suspicion, to carry his young and lovely wife from the allurements of the court, and the opportunity of receiving such general admiration. But it now was too late to retract. He must take the fate which he had chalked out for himself; though, in trying to avoid the present evil he had created, he probably might plunge into a greater.

CHAP. X.

THE travelling carriage, which was to convey Sir Ambrose and Rebecca from London, he ordered to be at the door by dawn of day, so that before any of the court was stirring, they might be far on their way to Margate.

It was not until they reached Dartford to change horses, Sir Ambrose signified to his wife that it was his intention to embark for Holland. He fixed on Rotterdam first, because he never had been in the Netherlands; and secondly, because he thought it a part of the world where they were less likely to meet with any of the gay court of London; cities of commerce seldom being the resort of the fashionable or idle.

Rebecca, totally indifferent to where she was banished, since finally separated

from Lady Cordelia, remained very passive, and tried to call her attention to the new scenes which hourly were presented.

Sir Ambrose endeavoured to make up for the deprivation she suffered by more good humour and attention, than of late he had shown his wife, but still he was gloomy, abstracted, and sunk into temporary fits of silence, but became comparatively cheerful at every lengthened mile from the metropolis.

When they embarked at Margate, the weather was tempestuous, and the sea very rough. Rebecca beheld with awe and dread the raging billows; she fain would have retarded their voyage, but Sir Ambrose was impatient to lose sight of England, and as the wind proved fair, the master of the vessel put out to sea, unheedful of danger. With fearful rapidity they were carried along, and shortly were within sight of Rotterdam; the sun shone brightly on the waves, and glittered on the edifices of the city. Not-

withstanding the wind drove them into the harbour with an alarming swiftness. The quay was crowded with spectators to witness their safe anchoring, for the vessel tossed from side to side, and at last dashed with such violence, that some of the passengers, who stood on the deck, were the next minute precipitated into the sea as the waves broke over the ship, and some sank to rise no more. Sir Ambrose Templeton was one in the number, thus falling a sacrifice by his wilful delusion to a fate he might have avoided.

Rebecca, who had been desired by her husband to remain in the cabin, as the deck, in such a raging sea, was no place for a woman, heard the dreadful, the appalling death-shriek ; and springing from the floor on which she had thrown herself, sick and terrified, she lost all sense and recollection on beholding a scene too terrible to describe, though the worst was then over ; as, by the daring intrepidity and active exertions of the sailors

belonging to another vessel, the surviving passengers were preserved in the life-boat, and had got safe into harbour.

Rebecca, more dead than alive, was unconscious of the awful fate of her husband. On coming to her senses, she found herself on the quay, supported by a gentleman who had witnessed the disaster, and humanely afforded her every relief and assistance in his power. He was one of the most respectable and opulent merchants in Rotterdam. He had witnessed the fatal catastrophe, and suspected it to be the case, that the lady's husband and female servant had certainly perished.

Pale, exhausted, her hair dishevelled, her garments dripping, Rebecca was a most piteous object to look at. At length she raised her languid eyes, and feebly exclaimed, "Where am I — what is become of my husband? Pray, tell me, Sir, for I am quite bewildered."

"Madam," the gentleman replied, as

he anxiously gazed upon her, “be at present satisfied that you are in safe hands, and shall be humanely treated.”

“But where,” she continued eagerly, “is Sir Ambrose Templeton? — why is he not here, and my servant Amy? — Oh, God! perhaps they both have perished.”

He evaded a reply, only humanely entreating her to allow him to conduct her to a place of rest, where she would be properly taken care of, as they were within a stone’s throw of one of the principal hotels.

Rebecca, after again and again in vain enquiring for Sir Ambrose, suffered herself to be led to the hotel, where she was humanely attended by the hostess, whose compassion was excited by the melancholy history which the merchant gave of the lady.

Rebecca, from complete exhaustion, fell into a sort of stupefaction, which was succeeded by a fevered, perturbed

sleep, with delirium. When she awoke to a sense of the dreadful calamity which had happened, she became certain that Sir Ambrose had perished with the other passengers, else he would ere now have appeared, as Amy, a few hours afterwards, was conducted by the humane gentleman to the hotel.

Every attention which could be afforded, was bestowed on the helpless Rebecca. The watchful assiduity of the merchant was more than ordinary kindness from, as she imagined, a perfect stranger. He rested not without constantly enquiring after her ; and at length, unfitted as she was to see any one, attained his point in being admitted to her presence.

Rebecca consented to see the gentleman, in the hope of obtaining from him some tidings of her husband, whose fate had been carefully concealed till she was better able to support the information of his death.

Though Lady Berry had never felt that tender affection for him which she had entertained for Sir John Berry, yet he was her husband — she was bound to him for the rest of their existence ; and to lose him by so melancholy an accident, was too terrible not to shock and affect her deeply.

Thrown, too, on the compassion of strangers, in a foreign country, separated from all her friends, unprotected, and alone, was a situation so painful, as to add to her present calamity. Yet she rested her hope where comfort is only to be found.

Rebecca, now sufficiently recovered to see the stranger, whose name she heard with surprise, (though other persons might bear the same,) agreed to admit him ; and he was shown into her apartment, where Amy stood in attendance at the back of her lady's chair.

When the merchant advanced to address her, a crimson glow spread over his

face, and he was evidently much agitated ; while Lady Berry turned deadly pale as she held out her hand, and exclaimed, “Oh ! how shall I speak my gratitude, my thanks. But this, if I mistake not, is not the first kindness bestowed on Rebecca by Mr. Elton. It is the son of my kindest, my best friends, that surely I now see.”

“ And will Lady Berry,” he added, his eyes glistening with delight, “ indeed recognise me as such ? and has not time nor circumstances made a change ? I will not do you such injustice, for it would be unlike the Rebecca of former years, could it indeed be so, that now I have providentially been sent to render you every benefit in a land of strangers, I truly rejoice. Consider me then as you always have done, your friend and brother ; command my services ; point out all you wish, all you desire, which I shall be too happy to fulfil.”

“ Answer me one question,” she re-

plied, as the tears streamed from her eyes, “Is Sir Ambrose?” she stopped, unable to proceed.

Mr. Elton (for it actually was the son of her benefactors,) guessed the question, and was silent.

“Perhaps,” she said, with hesitation and embarrassment, “you are not aware that Sir Ambrose Templeton is my husband. I am distressed — deeply distressed, till I learn what has become of him. I am afraid his has proved a melancholy fate. Did he perish?”

The earnest solicitude with which she spoke, distressed Mr. Elton almost as much as Rebecca expressed herself distressed.

“He certainly has not been heard of,” he gravely replied, “amongst the passengers that are saved.”

“Then it is as I feared,” she cried, with a burst of anguish. “Poor Sir Ambrose!”

Mr. Elton’s situation was delicate;

this was the second time he had been called upon to act as a sort of guardian and protector to Lady Berry, in the first hours of her widowhood, and himself loving her with tender affection, it required some philosophy to conceal those feelings of tenderness, which stole upon him at a moment when he beheld her overwhelmed with sorrow, and looking more interesting and lovely than ever, in all her sober sadness.

Rebecca felt deeply penetrated by Mr. Elton's friendly solicitude, in an hour when she required every kindness to mitigate the dreadful shock which she had experienced ;—the melancholy death of her husband, who, from a mind clouded by superstition, appeared to have accomplished the fate he suffered, and seemed to be an awful lesson not to distrust Providence, nor to suppose ourselves creatures marked out for a destiny, we presumptuously imagine we cannot avert. Sir Ambrose had been wilfully guided by

a prediction, though not actually self-created, to have sufficient influence over his wild and fanciful imagination, as to render him the victim of delusion.

The more Rebecca reflected on the circumstance, the more fully she was convinced that some trick had been played upon her credulous husband by Buckingham and Rochester, from the words which accidentally had dropt from Lady Ossory, who, though she stated not the fact, had overheard sufficient to convince her it was so.

Lady Berry shuddered when she dwelt on the dreadful consequence which had resulted to Sir Ambrose; and though all ended well that respected Lady Ossory's wild frolic in visiting the magician, she severely chid herself for ever having consented to accompany her to Tower-street; but now too late to recall her folly, she had received too awful a lesson not to profit by it for the remainder of her life.

When Lady Berry became sufficiently

collected and recovered to think of her future destination, she entered into conversation with Mr. Elton respecting her plans ; as he had offered his services in too friendly a manner to be rejected. She consulted him on the measures it was necessary to take concerning her large property dispersed in various quarters. Rebecca had been accustomed to his opinion and advice. He was the son of her warmest and most attached friends ; and though she felt somewhat embarrassed from the consciousness that formerly he had entertained for her a tender preference ; yet under existing circumstances, with no other person to guide and advise her, his opinion and protection were unavoidable, and would have discovered a want of confidence, and suspicion most ungenerous towards her early friend.

Rebecca wished now to immediately leave Rotterdam, and embark for Liver-

pool, to which port vessels were constantly sailing.

Mr. Elton proposed to Lady Berry a visit to his sister; but under her present depression of spirits, she preferred the society of her maternal friend Mrs. Chesterville; and to join her family circle, she thought, would more effectually tend to cheer her mind; for she was under restraint with the prioress, a feeling which had daily increased since her acquaintance with Lady Ossory, and the admonitory letters she had received on the subject.

Mr. Elton became delicate in pressing her going to his sister, as he observed that Rebecca evidently endeavoured, at least for the present, to evade it. He constantly visited her at the hotel, his affection increasing each time that he saw her. Rebecca was much improved in person and manners since their separation. Though she in some degree retained her natural simplicity of character,

she had acquired a polished gracefulness and acquaintance with life, which, while it gave her consequence, inspired respect, and became her high condition. She was not elevated by false pride; but though dignified, she was meek and naturally timid; and she possessed a frankness and ease the most captivating.

Mr. Elton having no plea to detain her, (though he lived but in her presence,) heard with evident concern the time fixed for her voyage, as soon as she had signified to Mrs. Chesterville her intention of coming to Liverpool.

Mr. Elton could scarcely restrain his grief when he conducted Rebecca to the vessel. She was distressed on observing his emotion; and as she kindly pressed his hand, said, "My worthy, my esteemed friend, be assured that Rebecca Berry cannot forget your repeated acts of kindness in the hour of solitude and affliction. Receive my gratitude, and my warmest good wishes."

“ And will Lady Berry, indeed, recollect there is so insignificant a person in the world, when she has been surrounded by all the great, the gay, the clever ? ”

“ For that very reason, the more likely to remember the son of my benefactors.”

She kissed her hand to him as the vessel glided from the shore, and was soon safely landed at Liverpool.

CHAP. XI.

THE meeting of friends, after a long separation, is always delightful. Mrs. Chesterville folded Rebecca to her bosom with the tenderness of a mother ; and the greetings between them were those of warm affection.

Mrs. Chesterville beheld with pleasure the great improvement which had taken place in Lady Berry's person and manners, since she last had seen her. Her girlish loveliness was matured into a radiance of beauty which, while it dazzled, bespoke a reflective mind and superior understanding ; and her manners, an acquaintance with the world, which had stamped a graceful demeanour and a softness of address, persons always resident in the country rarely acquire.

The accomplishments which she had

acquired, showed the quickness of her capacity. Mr. Chesterville, who was fond of music, was charmed with her taste and skill ; and never had her guitar been in such requisition as during her stay at Liverpool.

Mrs. Chesterville possessed a delicacy of mind which kept her silent respecting Rebecca's marriage with Sir Ambrose Templeton. She had fulfilled her vow, and her maternal friend was not sorry that so soon she had been released from a man she considered little less than a monster. This opinion she breathed not ; and as Rebecca did not revert, in the most distant manner, to her late marriage, the subject was never discussed.

She was not, however, silent respecting the noble friends with whom she so recently had parted. She spoke of them in the warmest terms of admiration and regard. She amused Mrs. Chesterville, who knew nothing of courts or courtiers, with a thousand anecdotes of the pro-

minent characters of the day ; of their ludicrous pastimes, their voluptuous habits ; of their insinuating and captivating manners, and the incessant vortex of amusement which followed one upon another. Rebecca related all these anecdotes with a vivacity and humour which extremely diverted and surprised Mr. and Mrs. Chesterville ; for she had always shown a pensiveness rather than sprightliness of character.

Rebecca, from her intimacy with Lady Ossory, had caught a spark of her humour ; nay, insensibly, many of her phrases. Often, when persons are in close association, their speech, their manners grow into a similarity, without an attempt at imitation ; for the habits and sentiments of those we love are so familiar, as to be at length imbibed and become one's own. Hence, the importance of choosing wisely our friends and companions. The mind either improves or degenerates. The

heart expands into noble and generous feelings, or becomes sordid and contracted ; the taste refines according as the taste is directed ; the habits of life, the manners of individuals, are formed into what is amiable, gentle, and graceful by good example ; or degenerate into vulgarity and illiberality from associates who soon sink their companions to the same level. The human mind is capable of great expansion, or it is easily warped by prejudice and contraction.

Seated round the Chesterville's happy social fireside, Rebecca fain would have remained for sometime longer, if repeated letters from the prioress had not urged her to come to Bristol, in consequence of having heard from her brother of the death of Sir Ambrose Templeton, and his unexpected encounter with Lady Berry. As it was necessary for her soon to go to London, Rebecca considered it but a just tribute of gratitude and friendship to accede to the prioress's request ; and

though reluctant to take leave of her valued friends, she prepared to quit them.

Again was Rebecca fated to separate from the many tender remembrances associated with the Chesterville family from the period of childhood to that of riper years ; she felt she was parting from parents rather than friends, and her spirits sank into deep dejection, when Mr. Chesterville saw her on board the packet, which was to convey her to Bristol.

She had a quick passage, and soon was emerged into quite a different scene of life. When she reached the monastery, its gloomy sequestered appearance affected her spirits. What a change — the solemn silence which prevailed, to all the gaiety of Whitehall ! — every individual bounding with vivacity ; gorgeously apparelled ; amusement the only seeming occupation ; every person outvieing each other in wit, sportiveness, and courtesy. Here shut out from the world, every step was measured ; every word consi-

dered ; and if its inhabitants were unacquainted with its sorrows, so were they alike strangers to its pleasures and enjoyments ; and Rebecca insensibly shrank from the rigid scrutiny which hung on every word and action.

Rebecca chid herself for the restraint which she could not shake off in the presence of the pious sisterhood. The prioress received her with warm affection and kindness ; and at the moment of their meeting, Rebecca experienced in return, a sensation of real pleasure in again embracing a faithful friend ; but when, with uplifted hands and eyes, Constance blessed the holy mother for having preserved her unpolluted amidst the perils by which she had been surrounded, and restored her safe into the bosom of that sanctuary where alone true happiness was to be found, she gladly would have spared her fervent ejaculation.

She was graciously welcomed by all

the nuns, who tried all their little arts to ingratiate themselves in Lady Berry's favour.

Rebecca heard the prioress's multiplicity of questions in silence, and with many a suppressed sigh. They were quite inquisitorial, and at length she was compelled to answer as briefly as she was able.

Rebecca would have been much diverted with the impatient repinings of her maid, Amy, who could ill endure the restraint and diet imposed, after all the luxuries and pastimes she had partaken in London, if matters of higher importance had not engrossed her. At length Lady Berry became almost as impatient as herself, from the constant persecution of the prioress and nuns, leaving no measures untried to make her a member of their community. That persecution was the very incitement against it. There is a natural perversity in human nature, which inclines to rebel where

coercive measures are resorted to, and the person is often foiled in the very point they are most anxious to carry.

- Rebecca was by no means devoted to the pleasures of the world ; on the contrary, she preferred the sober enjoyment of domestic life, when enlivened by refined society. She saw nothing within the walls of the monastery to promote even that enjoyment ; only the most bigoted forms and self-denials, which gave neither cheerfulness to the spirits, nor health to the frame.

- The nuns were little better than living automatons, moving by clock-work ; they rose, prayed, fasted ; prayed again and again ; going through the same ceremonies to the end of time.

- After some weeks' residence in the monastery, it became so painful to Rebecca the perpetual contention with a friend she so much valued, that her health began to suffer, and her spirits to decline,

owing to the prioress's unwearied persecution.

"Pray, my lady," said Amy, one day to Rebecca, when she found her weeping, "do leave this dismal place ; it will be your death, and I am sure mine, if you stay much longer ; what with fasting and praying day and night, I am worn to a skeleton. It would do one's heart good to hear some of the merry tunes we used to have at Whitehall, instead of the nuns' doleful chanting, for all the world, like the burial service. Those were blithesome days I warrant me."

Lady Berry consoled Amy, by assuring her, before it was very long she should quit Bristol and return to London.

Amy was in a transport at the intelligence.

Rebecca determined to take the first favourable opportunity of breaking the subject to the prioress.

A letter, the next day, from Lady Ossory, confirmed her in her purpose of

leaving the monastery, and accepting the countess's invitation.

“ *From Cordelia, Countess of Ossory, to
the Lady Berry.*

“ Did I not know you to be the most charitable of ladies, I might well despair of this letter finding favour in your sight, when it had reached your hands ; as, in good sooth, it is nothing more or less than a petition, which you will no doubt think ought to be deferred, till I have clothed at least the first half-dozen sentences herein contained with a mourning suitable to make acquaintance with your affliction. Yet, whatever appearance my words may wear, they are traitors to my thoughts if they do not sincerely partake of any sorrow that oppresses you, however unable *I* may be to appreciate its *nature*. Indeed you must allow, my dear Lady Berry, (that is, if you *are* half as sensible as you *were*,) that

I, who know nothing of husbands, beyond having just got the best in the world, can be but little skilled in the art of condolence for one who, forgive me if I say, did not, in my idea, quite answer this description ; but as I am one of those wise, or if you will, vain persons, who never attempt any thing in which I am not excellent, I shall leave this subject at rest from my interference, and at once enter on my avocation of begging, for which, I hope, my success will prove me fully competent. And here commenceth my first essay : I do entreat, most excellent lady, in the name of mercy, and for the sake of Lord Ossory and myself, that you will in pity bestow on us some weeks of your company, were it but to see how marvellously happiness changeth the disposition. When I was unhappy, as you may well remember, I was a miser with my grief, and did not care that any body should share, or even see it. But now that I am happy, who is so ostentatious ? I

wish to display my wealth to the whole world, and to let them envy me if they like ; for in truth they well may, as few can ever be on a par with me in this respect. Yet do not think that I wish *you* to come here for the purpose of corrupting you into the engendering of so evil a fault as envy ; as I chiefly wish your presence, from a strange fancy which possesses me, that this very happiness of which I have been speaking, is as contagious as the plague or the scarlet fever. You can but come and try ; and if, after you have thoroughly caught the infection, you weary of the malady, you may return to your monastery, where, I have no doubt, you will be completely cured of it in a very short time ; but, as little Jermyn says, ‘ Nothing is to be had for nothing in this world,’ so I must bribe you. Nay, do not toss your pretty head, and look offended at the word ; for my Lord Shaftesbury averred the other day, that ‘ every one may be bribed, if we can

but find out *what* to bribe them *with*?" So nothing now remains, but for me to find out *what will* bribe *you*. Let me see, suppose I try news, the news of this good city, in order to remind you of how well the air of Whitehall used to agree with you.

" Well then, to begin: Lady Muskerry has presented her lord with a little Princess of Babylon; and he, having wished for an heir, (and men always thinking that they should have what they wish for,) has gone down to Summerhill, there to get over his disappointment as he best can; while the Duke of Bucks has set it about that the young Muskerry was born with St. Vitus's dance, which he says is natural enough, considering that St. Vitus (the only saint famed for dancing) is his mother's patron saint, or she his patron sinner, he does not exactly know which way the matter stands.

" The news of the queen's illness has,

of course, reached you ; but I do not think the particulars can have done so yet. So take them as they happened : Last Thursday, about twelve at noon, the king was summoned to her majesty's apartments ; where he found the Duchess of York, the Countess of Penètra, Miss Jennings, and Miss Middleton all kneeling round the bed, bathed in tears. The queen, who was sitting up in the bed supported by pillows, took his hand, and pressing it in her's, said, in a faint inarticulate voice, that she should die as she had lived, wishing him every happiness.

“ The king, who is (as you know) as far as impulse goes, the best hearted person in the world, was so affected, that he embraced her, and conjured her to ‘ live for his sake.’ The poor queen, who, during her life, had never disregarded his slightest request, did not, even when dying, forget the vows of obedience she had plighted to him, and so, taking him at his word, she from that

hour grew better.* But the most edifying circumstance of all is, the extreme and decorous grief that continues spread over the king's visage, notwithstanding that his consort is now almost quite recovered; but this all the courtiers attribute to the excessive chagrin which must have seized him at the fear of losing her majesty, and which, though now no longer seasonable, has taken such strong hold of him, that it is beyond his strength to shake it off. But Miss Stewart does her part, and keeps him in countenance, for, during the queen's indisposition, she had shut herself up with great dignity, refusing even to see the king, for, not content with governing *him*, she had taken the resolution of extending her empire to his subjects and dominions; this little plan has, however, been frustrated by her *present* majesty's sudden and unex-

* For the most amusing account of this circumstance, see Count A. Hamilton's Memoirs of the Comte de Gramont.

pected recovery. However it would be too much even for the beautiful Stewart, to have *all* her wishes *crowned*, and the victories she has gained over Lady Castlemaine and La Kiraoulle,* in the wars of coaches, jewels, and presentations, rival those of Condé and Turenne, at least in *number*; and besides this little disappointment gives a shade of sadness to her beauty, which quite counteracts that silly expression which was the only thing that prevented its being perfect. So you see, *à tout malheur quelque chose est bonne*, and I doubt if it is not worth losing a throne for an increase of beauty, at least to her; for had it been the reverse, and that she had lost her beauty, she might also have lost her empire; as it is, she has only lost a kingdom, but, it seems, *she* will not view the matter in this light, as it is bruited about that she means to exile her ambition to

* Afterwards Duchess of Portsmouth.

a ducal coronet, and become Duchess of Richmond ; and that the Duke of Bucks, who cannot live without a plot, is making all the necessary arrangements to transplant this flower from Whitehall to the bowers of Richmond.

“ My cousin Elizabeth and De Gramont are, just as they were, not one bit farther or nearer to becoming all in all to each other. Anthony Hamilton is gone to France, as he says there is no getting coffee in England that is drinkable. — Sir Charles Sedley has betaken himself to the sea coast in Kent, with the pretty Maraquita Corvo ; the old Jew her father is frantic, and wants to insist upon Sedley’s marrying her ; but he only reminds Corvo of his own words which used to aver, that ‘ none but de firsht dukesh, or lordsh in de kingdom should marry hish daughtersh ;’ and Sedley tells him that he is ‘ neither the one nor the other, but a mere *gentleman*, which he says, in good Latin, means the *rara*

avis in terra of Whitehall.' Here endeth all my news, and it is time that it should, for my courier is going off, and my letter is as long, as long, as we hope, my dear Lady Berry, your visit will be to us. Ossory sends a thousand greetings, entreaties, and good wishes, but I have not room for my own, so shall not insert his. Now, 'lady fair, a fair good night ;' and may this find you mine, as it leaves me yours, in

" All truth and sincerity,

" CORDELIA OSSORY."

The perusal of Lady Ossory's letter confirmed Rebecca in her intention to leave Bristol without delay. She had a difficult part to act, foreseeing, when she finally signified her intention, it would weaken the friendship existing between the prioress and herself ; yet, wherefore barter her happiness and comfort, merely to indulge a persecuting spirit founded on error and prejudice ? Since the death

of Sir Ambrose, the prioress had become more zealous and active in her endeavours to withdraw Rebecca wholly from the world. Could she, by sacrificing her own enjoyments, have added to those of her friend, except ideally, she might have relinquished every selfish consideration, from a sense of gratitude for the friendly support afforded by her parents, when she was destitute of a home and protection ; but, in the present instance, it would only be yielding to the most erroneous opinion, without any satisfaction to compensate for so doing.

There are moments, however, when our firmest resolves yield to the sudden impulse of weakness ; and such Rebecca now experienced, as her eyes met the benign, placid countenance of the prioress ; and her heart melted into tenderness as she meant to signify her departure, and the words died on her lips.

“What disturbs our daughter Rebecca ?” anxiously enquired the prioress ;

“speak freely; your brow is ruffled, and your cheek colourless.”

“I will,” answered Rebecca, “as it is your desire; though sensible what I have to say may prove displeasing, I will be sincere and candid.”

“Sincerity becomes every one; this is no place for worldly guile.”

“I daily find my health declining,” Lady Berry continued, in a faltering accent; “I must change the scene—the confinement of this sanctuary does not agree with me.”

“Rather say,” interrupted the prioress, with asperity, “this holy sanctuary is unsuited to your late vitiated habits, and has weaned you from the care of your immortal soul. Your gay associate, the Lady Ossory, that court-butterfly, has filled your mind with silly vanity, stolen your affection from your oldest friends, and would carry you from yourself, by leading you into continual scenes of pleasure.”

“Indeed,” cried Rebecca, warmly, “you are mistaken. You know not the countess — you cannot know her. Oh! if you did, how different would be your opinion.”

“You intend going to her house,” answered the prioress, with a look of scrutiny; “I am sure she has invited you.”

Lady Berry coloured, and was silent.

“You stand,” proceeded the prioress, “on the brink of a precipice, ready to fall. You are now good and virtuous — Oh! Rebecca, fly from temptation while you are able — shun the impending danger spread to ensnare you. What a court is Charles’s! — abounding with licentiousness, vice, and intrigue — women so notoriously indecorous — men so depraved, are such to prove the future associates of Rebecca? Of Lady Ossory I can know only by general report; nor any thing against her, except that her mansion is the resort of the most conspi-

cuous for wit, talents, and court flattery. Lady Ossory has a husband to protect, to sanction her — Lady Berry now stands alone in a world in which she is a mere novice, ignorant of its modes, not yet initiated in its vices, and not sufficiently wary to see the danger before her. Summon resolution to refuse the invitation I guess you have received from Lady Ossory.”

“ That,” answered Rebecca, with firmness, “ is impossible ; I must go to London ; my affairs require it : and to whom can I go now, without a home and without friends, except to Lady Ossory ? ”

“ Then,” exclaimed the prioress, vainly striving to conceal her displeasure, “ it is all settled, without even asking my opinion.

“ How eager you are to fly into a world abounding with vanity and deceit ! Poor, silly young woman ! to wilfully shut your eyes to the dangers by which you are surrounded. Since you are in-

corrigible, you must, daughter, even follow your own wayward inclination. Here we use no coercion — whatever befalls you rests on your own head. I would warn, I would keep you from future evil, but you will not listen to the voice of your spiritual monitor.”

Rebecca could only weep in silence, for she was too much hurt and affected to contend with the prioress, and was resolved to depart.

The prioress, finding argument and persuasion unavailing, merely added, “Though you are young, affluent, and uncontrolled — mistress of your actions, remember, daughter, you must render a strict account of every word and deed. May you not be found wanting when that period arrives ! And now receive my last benediction.”

“Not your last, I trust,” said the weeping Rebecca; “we shall meet again, without you wholly renounce me.”

The prioress had a sincere affection

for Lady Berry ; that affection prompted her present zeal ; but, conscious she had no right to detain her, she suffered her to depart, with a promise that she would write to her from time to time.

CHAP. XII.

ONCE more safely landed on the fertile shores of England, Rebecca made the best of her way to Whitehall.

As she drew near that spot of gaiety and splendour, where pleasure alone presided, she again felt herself desolate and alone; and, as she gazed on the passing objects so familiar to her, she bestowed a sigh to the memory of her late husband, who, having unfortunately listened with too credulous an ear to the imposing and witty Rochester, had fallen into the snare he had prepared for him, and become the fatal victim of his own folly.

Rebecca remarked, from the day of the masquerade, Sir Ambrose was an altered man, even more than usually abstracted, gloomy, suspicious, and led

away, to all appearance, by some wild phantasy, which had governed his actions.

Lady Ossory's warm and kind heart beat not to the rules of cold ceremony. When she heard Lady Berry was arrived, she flew into the saloon with open arms to receive her.

Rebecca tried to chase away her tears ; for she was touched with her tender reception, as she gracefully took her arm, and led her into her own dressing-room.

" I will not at present," she said, " impose on you the society of a stranger, though that stranger is my husband ; and impatient as Lord Ossory is to see my dear Rebecca, I cannot allow him even to bid you welcome, till you assure me that it is quite agreeable to join our domestic circle, for we are very domestic ; and I am for ever ready to exclaim, in the words of the divine Milton,

" With him

- Conversing I forget all time,
All seasons, and their change ; all please alike."

"We are so happy," Lady Ossory continued, warmly; "too happy, I would almost say, for life is so brief."

"Dear Lady Ossory," interrupted Rebecca, "long be your felicity; may no cloud of sorrow ever obscure it. You have the power of diffusing happiness to others, and will not go unrequited."

When Rebecca was introduced to the young earl, she did not wonder that he had engaged the early affections of the Lady Cordelia. He appeared just the person to subdue and captivate a mind like hers. The gracefulness of his demeanour, with a face and person so strikingly handsome, that air of nobility, which gave dignity and refinement to his character, could not pass unnoticed; and when to all these was combined a spirit the most exalted, yet daring, which sprung from the best of feelings, it was very natural that the Lady Cordelia Germaine should become devoted to a youth who possessed all these powerful

attractions to win the affections of a young lady, his equal in rank, in beauty, and in sense.

The very stratagems used to separate and alienate them from each other had drawn them more closely together. At length united, never except by death to separate, Rebecca contemplated felicity so perfect with a sensation of envy. Such had been her felicity — pure and perfect as Lady Ossory's — during her short union with Sir John Berry ; and there were moments when she found herself obliged to withdraw from their engaging society, that she might weep alone, in her bereavement of the only object of her interest, and, she might add, of her genuine affection.

CHAP. XIII.

LADY Cordelia's marriage with Lord Ossory led her into even more than her usual routine of company, which rendered Rebecca listless and dissatisfied with her present mode of life. Though Lady Ossory's kindness was unbounded, and she lavished on her guest all that tenderness and sympathy which she so well knew how to bestow under her present calamity, yet Lady Ossory was somewhat incredulous as to the affliction she felt in the loss of a husband, so eccentric as Sir Ambrose Templeton, with habits which must have proved so little congenial to his wife's taste, together with the great disparity of years that existed between them; but she had too

high a respect for such virtuous sorrow not to the more admire Lady Berry for the cause ; who, with her youth and beauty, could withdraw herself entirely from the amusing resort of visitors which continually filled her house. Lady Ossory was too well bred not to leave Rebecca wholly to the guidance of her own inclination. She had herself such a dislike to restraint or compulsion of any sort, she was the last person to throw it on others ; though there were times, when, in her arch way, she, with a significant look, enquired, “ if she was not almost weary of the self-banishment imposed ? ” Then added, “ it really is quite cruel to hide such beauty from a world in which you are so universally admired.”

Lady Berry, with a mournful smile, replied, “ Ah ! Lady Ossory, how little do you still know of the simple, unsophisticated Rebecca, if for a moment you can really think I am imposing an

act of duty, or rather practising a customary form, which is not entirely prompted by inclination.

“ I have just,” she continued, “ seen enough of your world of fashion, of gaiety, of folly, to have amused me for the passing hour, as a child is diverted with some pretty bauble, or some novice, who, like myself, at first is ushered into the world to witness all its extraordinary spectacles, filled with such an odd variety of characters as must amuse and astonish for the time.”

“ Most wise reasoning,” exclaimed Lady Ossory, laughing.

“ Allow me,” Rebecca continued, “ seriously to ask you, my friend, whether all the whimsical scenes of festivities and revels, in which you have partaken with our monarch, his nobles, and his subjects, wearing so many fantastic guises, have internally contributed as much to your happiness as they have to

your amusement. I am sure you cannot say they have."

"Why, no! I believe not," returned Lady Ossory, with a half suppressed sigh; "but what," she added, "we have been born and bred in, becomes as natural to us, as necessary to us as our sleep and food."

"True," replied Rebecca, "but such scenes were new to me; one substantial pleasure," she gracefully added, "has been afforded, that of knowing you."

"Well," cried Lady Ossory, "that is so prettily said, that at least you have caught some of the court flattery, if you despise its follies."

"I do not flatter," replied Rebecca; "but hear me, my friend, on a subject painful to name, nor think me ungrateful, capricious, or weary of your society, after several weeks' trial, if I add, that, listless and unhappy in this gay metropolis, I languish to once more return to Westwood Park, at least for a time."

"Merely," interrupted Lady Ossory, "to indulge a fond and painful remembrance it were wise not to revive."

"Oh!" said Rebecca, warmly, "there is a joy in such grief the desolate heart alone can know."

Lady Ossory shook her head; after a pause she proceeded, with tender solicitude: "If, Rebecca, you are in serious earnest to depart, and are not quite weary of the society of such an old-fashioned couple as Ossory and myself, who never quarrel, nor are tired of each other, we will even speed our parting guest, and accompany you to Westwood Park, the paradise which your fancy has created; for as to your going mope, mope by yourself, I have too much regard for you to endure the very idea; therefore prepare for such noble guests."

Rebecca was delighted with Lady Ossory's proposal; and when they assembled at dinner, the plan was finally settled.

Lady Berry wrote to her steward to have the mansion at Westwood immediately prepared for the reception of her friends and herself.

CHAP. XIV.

How grateful did Rebecca feel for Sir John Berry's generous consideration in bestowing on her Westwood Park.

There she would principally reside, with the exception of spending sometimes a few months at Grove House, Stratford-le-Bow, bequeathed to her by Mr. Templeton, that she might testify her respect for his memory, and not wholly exclude herself from the society of Lady Ossory.

But of the court she meant to take a final leave. She first had mixed in its magic circle rather to please Sir Ambrose Templeton, than to gratify her own taste ; for her simple habits in early life had now become her inclination, though she had not been void of a high sense of enjoyment, when she joined in the more

private society of those brilliant personages who, of late, had formed so large a portion of her acquaintance.

The splendid mansion, occupied by her late husband at Whitehall, now possessed no attractions for Lady Berry. By her order it was again put up for sale. Sir Ambrose had left her munificently. Yorkshire was the last place (except to visit her parents) to which choice would lead her ; and Gloomore Castle remained unoccupied, except by two domestics.

No regrets attended Rebecca's final departure from London, when accompanied by such cheering agreeable friends. True, she looked forward with a mournful sense of enjoyment, to the still tranquillity of Westwood Park ; but she had, even in the hours of her heaviest sorrow, been soothed by the fond remembrance of Sir John Berry's tender affection ; and now it surely would be doing no violence to the departed shade of Sir Ambrose Templeton, by indulging the che-

rished image of the only man she could be said to love.

Lord and Lady Ossory felt real concern in parting with their interesting guest ; so unlike, as the countess said, every one she hitherto had seen in that region of folly and gaiety in which she mixed. There was a simple grace, a modest dignity, a sincerity and truth, in all she said, so uncommon ; a sort of sympathy of sentiment and feeling had drawn them together, with tastes, minds, and habits totally dissimilar. One was the creature of impulse and feeling ; the other, that of sedateness and reflection ; yet they were so far similar, that though Lady Ossory was the offspring of the graces, and tutored in the school of flattery and dissimulation, she had, as Sir Ambrose Templeton remarked, nothing artificial about her. The natural tenderness of her heart had not been rendered callous by a deceitful unfeeling world ; and the sympathy of her nature was al-

ways alive to the griefs and distresses of others ; she participated in the one ; and bountifully relieved the other.

Lady Berry entertained her noble guests with a munificence and easy grace which did credit to her taste and hospitality.

At the expiration of a month, they took an affectionate leave of their fair hostess, and proceeded direct from Westwood to London, to again emerge into court society and court scenes.

Rebecca had been enchanted with the society of Lord and Lady Ossory ; for they appeared ten times more delightful when withdrawn from the court, partaking, with seeming enjoyment, of those natural pleasures which result from books, rural scenes, and pastimes ; rational recreations, which neither destroy the health, nor vitiate the mind. There were moments when she almost regretted ever having known Lady Ossory ; for she sustained such a blank from her absence

that she was certain her future society and friendship was essential to her happiness through life.

Lady Berry had not been left many weeks alone at Westwood, when she was surprised by a visit from Mr. Thomas Elton, who, having been made the executor of Sir John Berry, came to her on some necessary arrangements of her affairs.

She received him with painful embarrassment; for she was not ignorant of the tender sentiments he entertained for her, and which was shortly afterwards confirmed by an offer of his hand at the expiration of a twelvemonth.

His proposal distressed Lady Berry exceedingly. During her widowhood, when she mourned the loss of Sir John Berry with heartfelt grief, she was compelled to marry Sir Ambrose Templeton, owing to a vow which she considered it a religious obligation to fulfil. Again a free agent, the ardour with which Mr. Elton pressed his suit was not merely

displeasing but painful ; for while she with firmness rejected his addresses, she was at the same time obliged to frame an excuse for leaving Westwood, to enable her to give him a dismissal, and she formed the hasty plan of visiting Mrs. Chesterville, to whom she wrote of her intention.

Delicacy and decorum now obliged Mr. Elton to depart, but not without his having first drawn from Rebecca a reluctant promise, that she would permit him to see her from time to time as a friend.

As the son of her late respected and kind benefactress, and the brother of the prioress, his request could not actually be refused ; therefore Rebecca, while she urged the hopelessness of his cause as a lover, gave a promise that she would sometimes admit of his visits as a friend ; and told him that on the following day she was going to Liverpool.

Lady Berry did violence to her incli-

nation in leaving Westwood Park.—“Sweet scene,” she exclaimed, “of departed felicity! how soothing to my desolate heart are all your pensile beauties! Ah! how cheering, how lovely has all around appeared, when brightened by the presence of my friends.”

“But I must go,” she added, as she mournfully gazed around, and snatched up a guitar to which Lady Ossory had so sweetly sung.

“No longer,” she continued, “will its touch vibrate to her soft melodious sounds; nor you, immortal Shakspeare (glancing her eye on a volume accidentally left open), be again read by her enchanting voice, with all that touching pathos which brings the melancholy Jaques, the love-lorn Orlando, and the tender Rosalind all before me.” She took up the book, which she meant, with the guitar, to make the companion of her journey, and on the following day, attended by Amy, left Westwood Park.

During the three following years Rebecca spent her time chiefly between Grove-house, Bow, and Leicestershire, and it was during that period Mr. Elton, by persevering in his suit, obtained at length Lady Berry's hand.

In the year 1694 Lady Berry died, and in Stepney church-yard is to be seen a plain monument, inscribed to her, which perpetuates the memory of

“THE FISH AND THE RING.”

NOTES.

Lady Berry's Monument in Stepney Church-yard.

“ On the east wall of the chancel is the monument of Dame Rebecca Berry, wife of Thomas Elton, of Stratford Bow, and relict of Sir John Berry, 1696.” — *Lysons's Environs of London.*

The arms to this monument are paly of six, on a bend three mullets, Elton empaling a fish, and in the dexter chief point an amulet between two bends wavy. This coat of arms, which exactly corresponds with that borne by Ventris of Cambridge, as described in the visitation of that county at the Herald's office, has given rise to a tradition, that Lady Berry was the heroine of a popular ballad, called “ The Cruel Knight; or Fortunate Farmer's Daughter.” The story is briefly this:

“ A knight, passing by a cottage, heard the cries of a woman in labour. His knowledge in the occult science informs him that the child then born was destined to be his wife. He endeavours to elude the decrees of fate, and avoid so ignoble an alliance, by various attempts to destroy the child, which are defeated. At length, when grown to woman’s estate, he takes her to the sea-side, intending to drown her, but relents; at the same time throwing a ring into the sea, he commands her never to see his face again, on pain of instant death, unless she can produce the ring. She afterwards becomes a cook, and finds the ring in the cod-fish, as she is dressing it for dinner. The marriage takes place of course.

“ The ballad, it must be observed, lays the scene of this story in Yorkshire.”—*Lysons’s Environs of London.*

THE CRUEL KNIGHT;

OR,

The Fortunate Farmer’s Daughter.

IN famous York city a farmer did dwell,
Who was belov’d by his neighbours well,
He had a wife that was virtuous and fair,
And by her he had a young child every year.
In seven years six children he had,
Which made their parents’ hearts full glad,

But in a short time, as we did hear say,
The farmer in wealth and stock did decay.
Tho' that once he had riches in store,
In a little time he grew very poor;
He strove all he could, but alas ! could not thrive,
He hardly could keep his children alive.
The children came faster than silver or gold,
For his wife conceiv'd again as we are told,
And when the time came, in labour she fell,
But if you will mind, an odd story I'll tell ;
A noble rich knight by chance did ride by,
And hearing this woman shriek and cry,
He being well learned in the planets and signs,
Did look in the book which puzzled his mind.
For the more he did look the more he did read,
And found that fate the child had decreed,
Who was born in that house the same tide,
He found it was she that must be his bride ;
But judge how the knight was disturbed in mind,
When he in that book his fortune did find ;
He quickly rode home, and was sorely oppress'd,
From that sad moment he could take no rest.
At night he did toss and tumble in his bed,
And very strange projects came into his head ;
Then he was resolv'd, and soon try'd indeed,
To alter the fortune he found was decreed.
With a vexing heart next morning he rose,
And to the house of the farmer he goes,
And asked the man, with a heart full of spite,
If the child was alive that was born last night ?
Worthy sir, said the farmer, altho' I am poor,
I had one born last night, and six born before ;

Four sons and three daughters I now have alive,
They are all in good health, and likely to thrive ;
The knight reply'd, if that seven you have,
Let me have the youngest, I'll keep it most brave ;
For you very well one daughter may spare,
And when I die, I'll make her my heir ;
For I am a knight of a noble degree,
And if you will part with your child unto me,
Full three thousand pounds I'll unto thee give,
When I from your hands your daughter receive ;
The father and mother with tears in their eyes,
Did hear this kind offer, and were in a surprise,
And seeing the knight was so noble and gay,
Presented the infant unto him that day.
But they spoke to him with words most mild,
We beseech thee, good sir, be kind to our child ;
You need not mind, the knight he did say,
I will maintain her both gallant and gay ;
So with this sweet babe away he did ride,
Until he came to a broad river's side,
Being cruelly bent, he resolv'd indeed,
To drown the young infant that day with speed,
Saying, if you live you must be my wife,
So I am resolv'd to bereave you of life ;
For till you are dead I no comfort can have,
Wherefore you shall die in a watery grave.
In saying of this, that moment, they say,
He flung the babe into the river straightway,
And being well pleased when this he had done,
He leap'd on his horse, and straight he rode home.
But mind how good fortune for her did provide,
She was drove right on her back by the tide,

Where a man was a fishing, as fortune would have,
When she was floating along with the waves.
He took her up, but was in a maze,
He kiss'd her, and press'd her, and on her did gaze,
And he having ne'er a child in his life,
He straight did carry her home to his wife ;
His wife was pleased, the child to see,
And said, my dearest husband, be rul'd by me,
Since we have no child, if you'll let me alone,
We will keep this, and call it our own.
The good man consented, as we have been told,
And spared for neither silver nor gold ;
Until she was eleven full years,
And then her beauty began for to appear.
The fisherman was one day at an inn,
And several gentlemen drinking with him ;
His wife sent this girl to call her husband home,
But when she into the drinking room came,
The gentlemen there were amazed to see
The fisherman's daughter so full of beauty.
They asked him then if she was his own ?
And he told them the story before he went home :
As I was a fishing within my own bounds,
One Monday morning this sweet babe I found ;
Or else she had lain in a watery grave ;
And this was the account which now he gave.
The cruel knight was in the company,
And hearing the fisherman tell his story,
He was vex'd at the heart to see her alive,
And how to destroy her he again did contrive.
Then spoke the knight, and unto him said,
If you will but part with that sweet maid, .

I'll give you whatever your heart can devise,
For she in time to great riches may rise ;
The fisherman answered, with a modest grace,
I cannot, unless my dear wife were in place ;
Get first her consent, you shall have mine of me,
And then to go with you, sir, she is free ;
The wife she did also as freely consent,
But little they thought of his intent.
He kept her a month very bravely, they say,
And then he contrived to send her away.
He had a great brother in fair Lancashire,
A noble rich man worth ten thousand a year ;
And he sent this girl unto him with speed,
In hopes he would act a most cruel deed.
He sent a man with her likewise they say,
But as they did lodge at an inn on the way,
A thief in the house with an evil intent,
To rob the portmanteau immediately went ;
But the thief was amazed, when he could not find
Either silver or gold, or ought to his mind,
But only a letter, the which he did read,
And soon put an end to this tragical deed.
The knight had wrote to his brother that day,
To make this poor innocent damsel away,
With sword or with poison that very same night,
And not let her live 'till the morning light.
The thief read the letter, and had so much grace
To tear it, and wrote in the very same place,
Dear brother, receive this maiden from me,
And bring her up well as a maiden should be ;
Let her be esteemed, dear brother, I pray,
Let servants attend her by night and by day,

For she is a lady of noble worth,
A nobler lady ne'er lived in the North ;
Let her have good learning, dear brother I pray,
And for the same I will sufficiently pay ;
And so loving brother, this letter I send,
Subscribing myself your dear brother and friend.
The servant and maid were still innocent,
And onward their journey next day they went ;
Before sun-set to the knight's house they came,
Where the servant left her and came home again,
The girl was attended most nobly indeed,
With the servants to attend her with speed ;
Where she did continue a twelvemonth's space,
'Till this cruel knight came to this place.
As he and his brother together did talk,
He spy'd the young maid in the garden to walk ;
She look'd most beautiful, pleasant, and gay,
Like to sweet Aurora, or the goddess of May,
He was in a passion when he did her spy.
Did you not do as in the letter I writ ?
His brother reply'd, it is done every bit.
No, no, said the knight, it is not so I see,
Therefore she shall back again go with me ;
But his brother shew'd him the letter that day,
Then he was amazed and nothing did say.
Soon after the knight took this maiden away,
And with her did ride till they came to the sea ;
Then looking upon her with anger and spite,
He spoke to the maiden and bid her alight.
The maid from the horse immediately went,
And trembling to think what was his intent.
Ne'er tremble, said he, for this hour's your last,
So pull off your clothes, I command you in haste.

This virgin, with tears, on her knees did reply,
Oh ! what have I done, sir, that now I must die ;
Oh ! let me but know how I offend,
I'll study each hour to make you amends.
Ah ! spare my life, and I'll wander forlorn,
And never come near you while I have breath.
He hearing the pitiful moan she did make,
Straight from his finger a ring he did take.
He then to this maiden these words did say,
This ring in the water I'll now throw away ;
Pray look on it well for the possey is plain,.
That you when you see it may know it again ;
I charge you for life never come in my sight,
For if you do I shall owe you a spite,
Unless you do bring the same unto me,
With that he let the ring drop into the sea,
Which when he had done, away he did go,
And left her to wander in sorrow and woe;
She rambled all night and at length did espy,
A homely poor cottage and to it did hie ;
Being hungry and cold and her heart full of grief,
She went to this cottage to ask for relief ;
The people reliev'd her, and the next day
They got her a service, as I did hear say,
At a nobleman's house not far from the place,
Where she did behave with a modest grace.
She was a cook-maid and forgot all times past,
But observe the wonder that comes at last :
As she a fish dinner was dressing one day,
And opened the head of a cod, as they say,
She found such a ring and was in a maze,
And she in great wonder upon it did gaze,

And viewing it well she found to be,
The very same ring the knight dropt in the sea.
She smil'd when she saw it, and bless'd her kind fate,
But did to no creature the secret relate.
This maid in her place did all maidens excel,
That the lady took notice, and lik'd her well ;
Saying she was born of some noble degree,
And took her for her companion to be.
Then he ask'd the lady to grant him a boon,
And said, it was to walk with that virgin alone.
The lady consenting, telling the young maid,
By him she need not fear to be betray'd.
When he first met her — Thou strumpet, said he,
Did I not charge thee never more to see me ;
This hour's the last — to the world bid good night,
For being so bold to appear in my sight.
Said she, in the sea, sir, you flung your ring,
And bid me not see you, unless I did bring
The same unto you : — Now I have it, cries she,
Behold, 'tis the same which you flung in the sea.
When the knight saw it, he flew to her arms,
And said, thou hast a million of charms :
Said he, charming creature, pray pardon me,
Who often contrived the ruin of thee ;
'Tis in vain to alter what heaven doth decree,
For I find you are born my wife to be :
Then wedded they were, as I did hear say,
And now she's a lady both gallant and gay.
They quickly unto her parents did haste,
Where the knight told the story of what had past ;
But ask'd their pardon upon his bare knee,
Who gave it and rejoiced their daughter to see,

Then they for the fisherman and his wife sent,
And for their past troubles did them content ;
So there was joy unto all them that did see,
The farmer's young daughter a lady to be.

“ Just as the day arrived for celebrating their nuptials, the Yorkshire knight arrived at his brother's seat in Lancashire ; and was not a little surprised to find this maiden, whom the stars had portended so fatally, as he thought, to be his wife, alive, and so near becoming his kinswoman. The two brothers had a great altercation, and the Yorkshire knight succeeded at last in suspending the nuptials. The brother soon after died.” — *Old Tradition.*

“ They agreed to decide their difference by dropping the ring into the sea ; with this provision, that whenever Rebecca Russell could reproduce it to the knight, she should become his wife.— *Old Tradition.*

“ Mr. Elton had allied himself by marriage to a lady of high birth, whose accomplishments might have embellished the greatest scenes, had not a love of domestic life induced her to prefer retirement to the splendours of a court.” — *Old Tradition.*

“ Mr. Elton survived his wife but a short time; and, after his death, a monument was erected to perpetuate the memory of the *Fish* and the *Ring*, on the east side of Stepney church.” — *Old Tradition.*

It is a plain tablet, on which is inscribed,

Here lyeth interred,
The body of Dame REBECCA BERRY,
The wife of Thomas Elton of Stratford-le-Bow,
Gent.
Who departed this life April 26, 1696.
Aged fifty-two years.

Come, ladies, you that would appear
Like angels fair, come dress you here;
Come, dress you at this marble stone,
And make that marble grace your own;

Which once adorned as fair a mind
As ever lodged in woman kind ;
So was she dress'd, whose humble life
Was free from pride, was free from strife ;
Free from all envious broils and jars,
Of human life the civil wars :
These ne'er disturb'd her peaceful mind,
Which still was gentle, still was kind.
Her very looks, her garb, her mien,
Disclos'd the humble soul within.
Trace her through every scene of life ;
View her as widow, virgin, wife ;
Still the same humble she appears,
The same in youth, the same in years ;
The same in low, in high estate ;
Ne'er vex'd with this, ne'er mov'd with that.
Go, ladies, now, and if you be
As fair, as great, as good as she,
Go learn of her humility.

THE END.

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